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THE LETTERS
OF
JAKE COLLINS,
OR
LARGE EXPERIENCE AND MANY TRIALS
IN
COUNTRY AND CITY CHURCHES.

PUBLISHED
BY
JOHN SMITH.

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To my Mother,

Who watched me in my infancy and youth, followed me with her sympathies and prayers in all the changes of my manhood, rejoiced over my conversion, and has always been glad that I found a companion in the person of Sallie Collins, this little volume is lovingly dedicated by

THE AUTHOR.



Divinity

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PREFACE.

THERE are a great many reasons why I wrote these letters. Some of these I am willing to give to the public and others will be kept as a family secret. Like the Masons, at our house we tell some things and prefer silence as to others.

The first half dozen letters were written upon the principle that a hole has to be bored in a keg with contents in a state of fermentation to keep the hoops from bursting. After partially relieving my mind I got tired, but the editor of *The Texas Baptist and Herald* urged me on. Having many things demanding my attention, and fearing that the public would get weary of seeing so many letters from the same source I feared to go on without appealing to the public. This I did in as modest a manner as I could, and so many urged a continuance that I yielded.

The scenes described in the letters are true to life. Most of them have passed under my

observation. Authentic information can be obtained from country and city pastors in Texas, as to the reality of the characters and scenes in detail.

The real objects in putting this book to press are as follows :

1. To help the cause of truth.
2. To make money to aid Buckner Orphans Home.

Let every one who opens this little book know assuredly that every dollar it yields above expenses goes to the support of orphans in that institution.

These are reasons enough to publish. Buy it, read it and help the Orphans Home.



INTRODUCTION.

BY JOHN SMITH.

JAKE COLLINS and I were brought up in the same neighborhood. He has been a rare specimen from his childhood. He never had the habits of a student of books, but as a boy and as a man he always seemed to see things that transpired around him and get profitable lessons from them. He was always intensely practical in his notions and honest in all his motives.

When his first letter appeared, my surprise and interest were about equal. I was amazed that he ever consented to have any of his letters printed in a newspaper, and was greatly interested that his effort should prove a success. Among his other admirers I have encouraged the letters, and am happy to introduce the work of my friend and associate to the public.

The subject he discusses is a fruitful one. The good of society and the glory of God alike demand the planting and development of churches in country and city. Every church

needs a man under good influences, with some means, a little leisure and a disposition to keep his church constantly stirred up on matters of discipline and enterprise. Such a man my friend and brother has proven to be in country and city.

In his letters you will find evidences of sound, common sense, a spirit always conservative and willing to be advised, and very many useful hints as to the best methods of avoiding trouble in great emergencies.

Having given his experience in church work he still would utilize his labor in helping to care for the Buckner Orphans Home.

As an evidence of the interest his letters inspired as they were passing originally through the columns of the *Texas Baptist and Herald*, I submit to the reader the following testimonials. Many of them were spontaneous, but others were called out by a statement in the paper that Jake Collins' timidity was about to overcome him, and that unless there was a general demand for the letters he would cease his correspondence:

One of the most readable series of articles began last week in the Open Letters of Jake Collins, one of the most conservative and instructive writers in Texas. His modesty conceals his name, but his letters will entertain and edify our readers in an eminent degree.

TEXAS BAPTIST AND HERALD.

Jake Collins' Open Letters amount to a sensation. They avoid personating any man.

or church, and aim at the elevation of our church methods without offensively criticising them.

TEXAS BAPTIST AND HERALD.

Jake Collins' letter was in type last week, but we had nearly twice as much up as we could get in. The demand for these letters is universal and most pressing.

TEXAS BAPTIST AND HERALD.

DEAR DR. HAYDEN:—So many people have teased and begged me to know who Bro. "Jake Collins" is, and all the particulars about him, and they have manifested such a deep interest in him and "Sister Sallie Collins" that I believe they all ought to know all about them; and now I propose, through the columns of the *Texas Baptist and Herald*, to tell them some of the particulars at least about Bro. Jake and Sister Sallie and their excellent family. It is of no use for me to introduce them to my readers, their names being so well known to every reader of the *Texas Baptist and Herald*. It has been my enviable privilege lately to visit their town, and meet an honest, earnest brother, who grasped my hand with unfeigned brotherly love, and frankly told me: "I am 'Jake Collins,' and 'Sallie Collins' and I want our house to be your home while you are in our town." It required but one breath to accept, and in thirty minutes I was received into the Collins home by the gentle smiles of welcome from Sallie Collins.

And such a home of happiness and love it has seldom been my privilege to enter. Love ruled so gently; there was no jar nor friction; each member of the family eager to catch a

want and supply it before it can be expressed by the fond parents.

Bro. Jake Collins and Sallie Collins have so much of religion that they wear it every day in the family just like they do at church on Sunday. As a striking evidence of the influence they exercise over their family in religion, it is a fact that not one of their children has ever passed the age of twelve years without being converted to the Lord. With what joy did Bro. Jake Collins tell me this fact, while Sallie Collins sat in tearful happiness, and neither claimed one word of praise, but gave God all the glory. How very true is the scripture: "Whoso honor-eth my Father, him shall my Father honor."

Jake Collins read me some of his manuscript letters to the paper, not yet sent in for publication, and surely the readers of the *Texas Baptist and Herald* have rich treats in reserve for them. He is very modest in his nature, and seemed afraid he might weary some of the readers with too much news from his church; but I assured him that I heard no such hints. Long live Jake and Sallie Collins, and may many families imitate their excellent example.

D. Y. BAGBY.

TO JAKE COLLINS,—Dear Brother: Permit me to add my testimony to that of hundreds of others who speak of the benefit derived from your letters in the *Texas Baptist and Herald*. I have read every one of them. About the first thing they did for me was to cause me to fall in love with Sallie Collins. Pardon me for the liberty, but I really could not prevent it. I

cannot help thinking she must be an own sister to a lady friend of mine who lives on Griffin Street, Dallas, and you know it is no harm to love kinfolks.

Bro. Brooks, too, is pure gold. I wept with you over the conversion of your boys; noble boys they are. I liked to have rejoiced aloud with Sallie Collins when the younger one was converted.

With you I have detested Bro. Dolittle, and despised that characteristic choir. I have fallen in love with Bro. Slaughter, too, and would so much like to meet him. I want to sleep in that preacher's room made neat by Sallie Collins. You see I have a way of believing everything you say. It was not until mature years had come to me that I could persuade myself that Robinson Crusoe was not a *bona fide* history. May I never have to be undeceived about Jake Collins. I am not so anxious to learn your real name as many others who have spoken to me about you. I am content to know that Jake Collins may be one of many noble men I have the privilege of knowing.

Your obliged brother,

A. J. HOLT.

I have been somewhat curious to know who this Jake Collins and Sallie Collins are. I think I have located them. Bro. Jake Collins and Sister Sallie Collins are good old-fashioned Bible Christians. Away down deep in my heart I can respond a hearty amen to every word he has written. I would that all our city, as well as our country churches, had a full

membership like Jake and Sallie Collins. We would no longer have unconverted men and women to conduct our choirs and sing—

“Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow thee;”

when not a word of it is true, they being strangers to grace.

I wish I knew where I could find a church, with all its members like Jake and Sallie Collins, and for its pastor a man of God like Elder Brooks. (Though our pastors and many others are like Elder Brooks). I am satisfied we would have a pastor who would not accept contributions brought in from these fashionable, unscriptural suppers, charades, fairs, etc., neither would we have a membership who would tolerate such unscriptural means for the worship of God and the support of their pastor; but, with willing hearts, full of love for the Master they would give of their means to the support of the Gospel. And I am of the opinion that when our churches are filled up with such material as Jake and Sallie Collins, we will have real spiritual enjoyment. Just imagine yourself in church, with a real consecrated christian woman performing on the organ, and all the choir full of love to God, and all the members with their hearts burning with love of God in them, singing with the spirit and with the understanding—

“Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly.”

Where is the preacher who could not preach his very soul out? It would almost seem like a spiritual cloud hanging over the congregation,

and the Spirit of God dripping from it until the entire membership would be completely saturated with the love of God. Now, with the spirit of unification and consecrated membership like Jake and Sallie Collins, and the cash system strictly adhered to, these would hold the entire Baptist family together.—S M. RUSSELL, Marshall, Texas.

The question of Bro. Jake Collins: "Shall I quit writing?" was doubtless suggested by that true modesty which seems to be inseparable from real merit. I vote that Bro. Jake still have the floor, and move that he be allowed to proceed until Sister Sallie pulls his coat tail and tells him to stop. I have seen the sweetest of women do that in church meeting. These letters have a mixture of good sense, scholarly simplicity and genuine piety which renders them very acceptable, and if they were only disfigured with a little bad English and awkward spelling would touch a very popular vein, which has been already too much stimulated. They are worth the entire subscription price of the paper.—J. C. WEST, Waco.

Tell Jake Collins to come up and take a little respite. I fear, that after his trials at Black Jack Ridge, and then his hard troubles with old Bro. Dolittle and his town church and choir, that he will be thrown off his balance. I am sure that rest would help him. And again, I want him to see how nice it is to have a church with no Dolittles in it, and have a choir who are orderly in every respect. I believe that if

we can induce him to pay us a visit he would never rest until he had secured a home with us.

JOHN O. WHITE.

Who is Jake Collins? Until I got your letter I thought he was "Jake Collins." Now I can only guess: Sam Anderson? J. B. Link? M. V. Smith? No. Well, I have no further guess. Who is he?—R. E. MELVIN, Camden, Miss.

Bro. Jake Collins letters are just splendid.—
MRS. S. R. CRAWFORD.

Jake Collins' letters are splendid. I am sorry I did not get to read them from the first.—Z. C. Taylor.

I want to see Jake Collins and his wife Sallie, and tell them how much people up here are enjoying their letters.—A. D. BROOKS.

I give my vote for Jake Collins to live as long as I do, and to keep writing till death.—
THOMAS CHESTER.

Jake and Sallie Collins constitute one of the attractions about the paper in this region.—J. T. S. PARK.

Sometimes I think Bro. Collins must once have been a member of our church. Sister Collins is certainly an angel of light.—*

I want to join other brethren in asking Bro. Jake to let his letters go out into the world in pamphlet form. They do my soul good.—
T. M. McCONNELL.

Jake Collins' letters are worth the subscription price of our paper each week.—W. C. MANNING.

May Jake Collins live to continue to wield the pen.—L. M. HINDS.

It does seem to me that the same sad result will happen to me that Jake Collins feared if he failed to speak out what was in his mind, if I failed to express my approval of his letters. I can scarcely wait to get the next one.—J. S. THOMAS, Luling, Texas.

Jake and Sallie Collins have immortalized themselves in Eastern Texas.—W. I. FEAZELL.

Tell Bro. Jake Collins to write on. His pieces are *par excellence*.—S. M. DIAL.

We take the *Texas Baptist and Herald* and the first thing I look for is Bro. Jake Collins' letter, but the best one I ever read is his number twenty, in which he relates the conversion of his sons.—MISS FANNIE WITT.

Give Bro. Collins plenty of rope, not that I think he will get it around his neck, but I think and hope he will get it around the necks of some of our Baptist brethren who are sending their children to dancing schools.—THOMAS WALKER, Kildare.

Bro. Jake Collins' letters knock the black out.—O. D. McILROY.

I think we have got another Sallie Collins in Leavenworth, Kansas, from the tone of her letters.—CHAS. ALCORN, Litchfield, Ill.

The letters of Jake Collins are splendid. I want them continued.—E. HALE, Alexander.

Husband and myself appreciate and enjoy reading Jake Collins' letters; hope he will continue to write for the benefit and edification of the readers of the Texas Baptist and Herald. I think he ought to tell us who he is, so if ever we should see him and Sallie Collins we would know them.—MRS. M. A. SKIDMORE, Fort Worth.

Say to Jake Collins to go on.—F. B. HARRIS, Hillsboro.

I would not take the price of the Herald for Jake Collins' letters alone, besides if we had more Jake Collins in many of our churches the cause of our blessed Master would prosper more.—D. C. HATCHER, Manchaca.

You may tell Brother Collins I am pleased with what he has written. Tell him to write on; don't quit yet, and to be sure to give heed to what Sallie says.—J. M. GAMBRELL, Moody.

Let Jake Collins continue to write. His letters are not only interesting but instructive. No denomination in Texas needs more of the severe "sledge hammer" blows he has been giving.—L. E. GITTECE, Dublin.

Several brethren here say: "Tell Bro. Jake Collins to come on with his pieces. They are truthful and spicy."—J. L. SIMPSON, Greenville.

Tell Bro. Collins to bore us some more. His articles are among the first looked for. I am, no doubt, like many others, inquisitive enough

to want to know who the brother really is, but I am not going to ask you.—IRA B. BROWN, Comanche.

Ask Jake Collins to write on. I am always anxious to see his letters, and more to know who he is.—H. F. HUFFER, Ennis.

By all means have Jake Collins to continue his articles until he tells us something of the town church work. His graphic portrayal of country church-life fastens the conviction on me that he will observe some things at his new home in town that will interest the readers of the paper.—J. C. COMBES, Jonesboro.

Let Jake Collins continue to visit us, and Sallie Collins, too. They are welcome visitors at our home. Such practical philosophy, like the dews of the morning, glisten in the sunlight of human realities.—J. C. WATSON, Buckholtz.

Tell Jake Collins to write on. I have never taken his letters in fun, nor do I think him cranky. God bless him and Sister Sallie.—A SUBSCRIBER, Moody.

Tell Jake Collins to continue to write. Wife and I could hardly read his letter No. 10 without saying "amen" time and again. May the Lord bless Jake and Sallie Collins.—CHAS. ALCORN, Litchfield, Ill.

Bro. Jake and Sister Sallie are no "bore." Don't stop them. As interesting and valuable as the grand old *Texas Baptist and Herald* is, it will be incomplete without Bro. "Jake."—J. W. BARNES, Anderson.

We earnestly wish Bro. Jake Collins to continue. I always look for his pieces the first thing when we get our paper.—E. ROBERTSON, Field Store.

Bro. Collins must not quit. His head is level in listening to Sallie Collins.—J. S. LEWIS, Keachi, La.

I do hope every Baptist will speak out in meeting, and say, like Oliver Twist, "more," still more of Jake Collins letters, for they are so spicy and replete with sound doctrine, (and being a woman) I feel constrained to add that I do believe Sallie Collins is a strong spoke in that wheel.—MISS ELLA PRIDGER, Porter Springs Times.

Tell Jake Collins to keep on writing. The first thing when I get the paper is to read it aloud to the family.—G. W. ROBERTSON, Youngsport.

Tell Jake Collins to continue and give us his experience in the church in town as soon as he gets time to look around.—C. W. JONES, Nacogdoches.

Say to Jake Collins, "Go on." He is picturing out some of our churches in South Texas as well as some of our preachers. Wish we had more such letters. May the Lord bless him.—B. F. DIXON, Missionary Gen. Con. for San Marcos Association.

We would say emphatically for Jake Collins to continue. If you have enough back numbers we would like for them to be sent to the clerk of every Baptist church in Texas, requesting

them to read them to their churches. Old time religion is good enough for me.—R. J. BATTLE, Greenwood.

May this free and easy style in which the letters are written interest the young and old alike, and be blessed of God in the interest of our churches and the orphanage.



LETTER NUMBER ONE.

A PAINFUL SUSPENSE—A REVIVAL—A DECLINE
—TOO LITTLE TRUST—TOO MUCH TRUST.

I have held my peace a long time. It seems that if I do not speak out my sentiments the very stones will cry out. I am very much in the same fix of the old brother, who, when ruled out of order, said : “Brethren, I know I am out of order since the moderator says so, but I must speak or bust.” To avoid that calamity the brethren cried out in the face of law and order and the moderator: “Speak, speak, let him speak.” I am not a college man and may make mistakes in some things, but I do believe I know the difference between right and wrong. I believe I can tell the difference between the profession of a good thing and the doing of a bad thing. Somehow I cannot get used to some things that are going on in our neighborhood. When I told Brother Sam Anderson how I felt about the difficulties of our

situation and how badly I wanted to write about them and the danger of an explosion, if I kept it all to myself, he told me to write and he believed you would print it.

As sure as the sun shines and water runs down hill, things are not doing well in our neighborhood. You know we had a revival. Our pastor reported sixty professions and forty baptisms. We had fifty members before the meeting closed. We had a good supply of sound doctrine dispensed. Both the preachers, our pastor and the evangelist, preached election, perseverance, baptism and communion. Total depravity and regeneration were faithfully and powerfully presented. Old brethren nodded approval and freely responded during the meeting, when they had opportunities given. Deacon Jones said the preaching was scriptural and the converts under it were bound to stick. Deacons Brown and Smith said there was no fox-fire in that kind of work and that the difficulty in the way of the churches was because of the milk and cider preaching; that good sound doctrine would make good sound Christians, that it never had and never would fail. Brethren Simpson and Turner joined hands with the deacons and many others, and, after mutual confessions, professed edification and said that

they now understood how men were "kept by the power of God unto salvation" as they never had before. They sang Amazing Grace, How Firm a Foundation, Let us Stand on the Rock, and similar songs, declaring that they never would go back to the weak and beggarly elements of the world. We had a good time. It was heaven on earth. I had no fault to find with the preaching or the meeting. It seemed all right at the time. It seems right yet. The people did not seem to embrace the gospel in cold blood, saying they believed Jesus Christ was the Son of God and wanted to be baptized as a matter of business, nor did they seem unduly excited. Head and heart seemed to be at work together. Intelligence and emotion seemed in holy wedlock, honoring the God of the intellect and the affections. Oh for more such meetings as we had.

It is not the meeting that puzzles me, but the way things have been going since the meeting. We are having a regular freeze out. We no more expect a conversion now in the regular way than we expect to find ice in August in the absence of a machine. Brethren say before we get another revival we will have to send for a man from another state and of another denomination at that. Deacon Jones has got tired of having prayer in his family, and yet two of his

boys and one of his daughters were converted in that meeting, and nobody could find fault with their experiences. One of the other deacons asked to be excused from praying in public and the third one seldom gets to our conference meeting and never gets to church till the sermon is about half over. The rest of the brethren seem to take but little interest and quite a number of our young converts are beginning to express doubts of their conversion and their fitness to remain in the church. Our contributions to missions have fallen off, and the pastor seems discouraged and talks of resigning. Our church was once like a good barrel, with iron hoops, full of water and not leaking a drop. Now it looks like a barrel without water, standing in the sun ready to fall to pieces. We can not quit and we are ashamed to have things run as they are. It looks as if the gospel would not stick as it did. The preacher hurls it at the people, and it seems to act like a boy's ball thrown at a wall. It flies back and hits him in the face. We seem to have dyspepsia.

Now, if there is a character on earth that I hate it is a growler, a faultfinder and a sore-head. These are average good people I am living among and writing about, and I am one of them. They take the *Texas Baptist and*

Herald and most of them read it. Our preacher does not seem to understand what is the matter. I believe I do. There is a lack of variety in the preaching and everything has got into the ruts. The public mind is one-sided. Preachers ride hobbies. In our zeal to trust Christ for the salvation of the soul, we trust him for everything. Under the preaching of election they say, God does that. In the work of regeneration they say "Born of God." They say that repentance and faith are gifts of God and therefore "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." Trusting the Lord for everything without any effort to help ourselves has gone to seed, and we are reaping the fruits of our doings. Final perseverance has two sides to it. We must persevere because we are preserved. Preserves are good and he who eats them should be required to work, and do a good deal of it. There are two classes of Christians, each making dreadful failures. One is working to keep out of hell. The other is afraid to work, for fear the angels, and men, and devil, and the Lord Jesus will suspect him of tinkering with the plan of salvation. I tell you, my dear brother, we are in a fix. Something will have to be done and done quick. While I am full of sug-

gestions, if you think you can do us any good, either come to see us or write to me at once. Don't delay. I am going over this evening to talk the matter over with some of our knowing brethren, and if I don't hear from you I will write again next week.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER TWO.

A GOOD WIFE—PEACE WANTED—TIMIDITY TRI-
UMPHS—DISCIPLINE DANGEROUS—SLEEPY
HOLLOW MISSION—MASONIC LODGE—SAB-
BATH DESECRATION.

I have talked a heap with my wife, Sallie Collins, since I wrote you last, about the condition of our church here on Black Jack Ridge. She knew I had asked you to visit us, and had you come you would have had a room all to yourself, a good, clean bed, and plenty of chicken.

What a comfort to a christian is a good wife. How a man can keep up his self-respect, keep in a good humor and have a heart to drive his business, when his wife won't help him, is strange to me. My wife puts on her best clothes and sweetest looks when she knows I am in trouble, as I have been recently about the situation of things in the Black Jack Ridge church. If ever a man on this sin-smitten earth had a

description of his wife, I certainly find an account of Sallie Collins in the 31st chapter of Proverbs, from the 10th to the 31st verse:

10. "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

11. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

12. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

13. She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

14. She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar.

15. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maiden.

16. She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

17. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.

18. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.

19. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.

20. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

21. She is not afraid of the snow for her household; for all her household are clothed with scarlet.

22. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.

23. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

24. She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

25. Strength and honour *are* her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

26. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue *is* the law of kindness.

27. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

28. Her children arise up, and call her blessed: her husband *also*, and he praiseth her.

29. Many daughters have done virtuously but thou excellest them all.

30. Favour *is* deceitful, and beauty *is* vain; *but* a woman *that* feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.

31. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates."

Now, brother Hayden, if you have never read this before, you read it over carefully, and then, after you have been at my house three or four days, you just tell me honestly if you don't think that Sallie Collins fills the bill. What on earth would I do at the present juncture if Sallie Collins were ill-tempered and ugly, snappish and sloven. I have almost enough as it is to break my heart. If, added to this, she were to meet me every evening coming from my work, with uncombed hair, cross words and in general Mother Hubbard style, I would be strongly tempted to believe that a man might, under certain circumstances, fall from grace. I see some women, close to where I live, who, compared with her, have no grace. It really seems to me that a man living with such would

be under law, and law alone, and might very easily fall away.

When I went to talk over matters with some of our knowing brethren, as I wrote you I was going to do, they heard me through and said that I was very unnecessarily exercised over the present state of affairs. Deacon Jones said that he had been a Baptist a number of years, and that this was nothing uncommon. He said that as there were "set times to favor Zion," so there were obliged to be set times for things to run loose. The other deacons and a few of the old brethren chimed in and called attention to the following evidences of prosperity:

First, they showed that we were at peace among ourselves. Now, I can plainly see that there is not actually life enough among us to get up a respectable disturbance. One of our deacons goes, I am told on good authority, to the saloon every time he goes to town, and, besides taking a little too much, carries with him others, paying a half dollar for drinks on Saturday, and then puts in the hat collection for missions on Sunday only twenty-five cents. Under no circumstances could one of the brethren disturb the sweet peace of the body by even asking the deacon to mend his ways much less even *talk* about calling for the fellowship of the church. I have only been in the

neighborhood three years, and when I talked seriously about the case they agreed that it did not become me as a new comer to raise questions, and that if I were not prudent I would lose my influence. They told me of a neighboring church that got torn all to pieces in a church trial, and they further exhorted me, saying: "Brother Collins, let us have peace. Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." My modesty and humility triumphed, and of course I yielded to the judgment of the older and more experienced settlers.

They tried to get me off from this, and on to other subjects, but I could not help talking about it. I feel that I am a Christian, and as strong as I feel my obligation to provide for Sallie Collins and the children and my unfortunate widowed sisters, I am even more anxious about my personal influence, and the power of Black Jack Ridge Church in leading the people to the knowledge of the truth.

I asked for information about some violations of the Sabbath and the covetousness of some, who, though in good circumstances, refused to give money or anything else to keep up the current expenses of the church, pastor's salary or missions. Here it was plainly intimated that I was meddling with matters that ought

not to concern me. I learned for the first time that I was simply expected to go to church when it suited, pay what I pleased or nothing, drink what I pleased and when and where I pleased, bear with the brethren, and accept the doctrine of the broadest personal liberty. All this I must do, or be denounced as a disturber of the peace of Black Jack Ridge Church, and of the neighborhood generally. This, of course, quieted me on that line.

Seeing that I dared not press the matter of discipline without breeding more trouble and abuse than my timidity could face, and still being anxious to do something, I raised the question of enterprise. Railroads are building, towns are springing up, and in the face of the command of Jesus I urged that we begin active work looking to the establishment of a mission and a Sunday-school over in Sleepy Hollow. Brother Brooks, our pastor, had said in my hearing that if the brethren would aid a little with their presence and money he was willing to undertake it. Ten dollars worth of supplies would start the Sunday-school and six of our members, I being one, would be a sufficient supply for teachers. One hundred dollars additional to the pastor's salary would be satisfactory for one Sunday on Sleepy Hollow. You ought to have seen the surprise depicted

on the countenances of these brethren. Why, they said, I was crazy and cranky and an enthusiast, and that my zeal was not tempered with knowledge, and some other things I would not like to report. Bro. Jones said the times were too hard. Bro. Smith said that the burdens of church already were too heavy, and Bro. Brown suggested that they actually could not afford to give the time the enterprise would require. Now be it remembered that Deacon Jones has five hundred acres in cultivation. He made one hundred bales of cotton. He has corn enough for two years, with wheat, oats and hogs and cattle and horses in proportion. Deacon Smith is in nearly as good condition as to a farm, and has five thousand dollars at interest, and yet complains of being burdened, giving fifteen dollars to a pastor, five dollars for home and one dollar for foreign missions. He refuses to give a cent to our educational interests and complains at the price of the *Texas Baptist and Herald*. Deacon Brown and two other brethren who decline to aid in this mission for want of time, are all Masons of high standing, rarely ever get home from the lodge before one o'clock Sunday morning, and often walk all over their farms and pastures Sunday evenings, simply to see, as they say, how things are moving along, occasionally stopping to mend a

broken wire, stop a crack, nail up a plank, trim a tree, pull a few stray weeds, mark a pig, look after some stray hogs and a cow, suspected of having a young calf, and just a few other things that can not be neglected.

I like these men. They are good neighbors. But they seem set in their ways. I can't argue them into a change. They say they have always got along on this line before I moved here, and they are in favor of letting well enough alone. To be called a disturber of the peace if I demand discipline, and to be called a crank and an enthusiast if I start a prayer-meeting and a mission Sunday-school, is more than I, at present, can face. I feel like a strange dog. If I bark, I will get all the little dogs to barking at me, and if I don't bark they may conclude I am a wolf. Going along home by myself I felt mean and lonesome and hungry and cold and forsaken and disgusted. Now I know that such thoughts and feelings are not manly, but you know me and can imagine how such things trouble me. If it were a drouth or epidemic, or a cyclone, or an earthquake, or a defeat of local option, I could be comparatively quiet; but when sinners are perishing and the banner of my Master is being trampled in the dust, I feel that the rocks and my very bones ought to cry for help.

When I reached home dear Sallie Collins met me in her usual cheerful mood and after I told her of my conference with the brethern, she urged me to cheer up, and said she hoped there was light ahead. At her suggestion we have sent for our pastor, Brother Brooks, and in my next, I will give you the result of our interview.

Your friend, JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER THREE.

PROPHET'S ROOM—COMING OF BRO. BROOKS.
THE EXACT SITUATION—DIAGNOSIS AND
REMEDY—MISSED HIS MARK—AN EFFORT
CHECKED.

Before we moved from Georgia to Texas, Sallie Collins called my attention to the preparation the woman of Shunem made for Elisha, the prophet of God. She actually believes that a good preacher these days is as certainly sent from God as were Moses, Samuel and Elisha. She said that Elisha's little chamber on the wall, with bed, and stool, and candlestick was just what a preacher, in traveling, needed, and that in making our settlement in Texas I must fix a room for the preacher.

Our pastor lives twenty-five miles away, over in an adjoining county, and preaches at Black Jack Ridge Church once a month, and for his services the brethren are expected to give one hundred and fifty dollars a year, if the crop is

good, and the mast is not blasted, and the doctors' bills are light, and the cattle and hogs are free from disease, and during the summer protracted meeting he succeeds in getting a good number of people to join the church. Failure in any of these, in the eyes of a great many of the members of Black Jack Ridge, relieves them of any obligation to pay all or even a part of their subscription.

It is considered a crime to call a man to account for failing to pay his subscription. The man that raises the question is a disturber of the peace, is guilty of a spirit of dictation, and is called a new comer with cranky notions. Seeing the situation of affairs I described in my last letter, Sallie Collins and I wrote a letter to Bro. Brooks, urging him to come to our house on Thursday night before the regular meeting and occupy our little room, made ready for the preacher three years ago, and kept in order since. We knelt and prayed earnestly around our family altar Thursday morning, and at sundown Bro. Brooks was at the gate. It would have been cruel to tax him with our troubles that night, and so, after early supper, and some of his and Sallie Collins' pleasant talk about family affairs, evening prayer was offered and he was left alone in his little room till sunrise Friday morning. Bro. Brooks had a great deal

rather talk to her than to me, and I am sure I never blamed him for it; first, because she is good and smart, and in the second place, the deacons, I imagine have prejudiced him against me because they think I am likely to stir up a fuss. If there is any thing on earth I do want to avoid most, it is a fuss, either with my church or Sallie Collins.

After breakfast I just told brother Brooks the exact situation of the case. I told him how the brethren were quitting their family altars, that the prayer-meeting had failed, that the Sunday-school was pretty much given up to picnic notions, that a few of the brethren were tippling, the Sabbath was being violated, and my perfect and complete failure in establishing the Sleepy Hollow Mission, and that, as the brethren were complaining of short crops and low prices, and that a low ebb had struck religion, my conviction was that about seventy-five or a hundred dollars of the one hundred and fifty dollars subscribed was about all they were expecting to raise. As preachers are regarded as in close partnership with the Lord, they seem to be held responsible, in a large measure for the short crops and sickly sheep, and hog cholera and dengue and such things. Therefore, under these circumstances, the sin of failing to pay a preacher what is promised is not to be

compared with the failure to settle with the lawyer and blacksmith and merchant.

The good pastor first looked at me with amazement, then with doubt, and then earnestly and tearfully, Sallie Collins came to my relief and assured him that I had given him the true inwardness of things in Black Jack Ridge Church. I told him that I had been doing but little for several months besides thinking and praying over the situation of the church, and that if he did not mind listening to my diagnosis of the disease and the remedy I would prescribe—and futher, if he would not consider me presumptuous—I would not mind delivering my opinion. Sallie Collins told him that we had talked the matter all over, and that we were perfectly agreed as to the cause and remedy of these things. When she talks business, and good old-fashioned horse sense, and looks into a fellow's face with those eyes that melted my soul in the old Goober State into submission to her will and happiness forever, she is simply irresistible. Knowing her power over me, she will think and pray a long time before she will seek to influence me on a question like this. At times she could almost make me stick my finger into the fire.

Together we told Brother Brooks that, after all there was a defect in the preaching. N

that there was anything wrong in what was preached, but there were some teachings in the Bible which had been overlooked during the protracted meeting, when the people were in a state of mind to receive and profit by them. Now during our last protracted meeting at which about two-thirds of our present membership were baptized, the preachers held up the terrors of the law of God with great power. They preached repentance till it looked as though a prodigal could not refuse to come home. They preached faith in Christ and salvation through blood until the youngest and weakest that joined our church would scorn the idea of depending in the least on machinery, tears, groans, prayers, preaching, ordinances, churches, or anything but the stripped, suffering, bleeding, dying Lamb of Calvary. Oh, the power of salvation that rested on my soul as I heard the doctrine of salvation by grace unfolded and standing beneath and behind the bloody cross, heard these men of God plead with my neighbors to flee from wrath and hide in Christ. Then they urged baptism, and the people obeyed, and after a general handshaking we all went home. The meetings only lasted ten days each, and all that time was given to preaching law, wrath, repent, believe and be baptized. We told Brother Brooks that active

church work was not discussed at all during the meeting, that the relation of pastor and people was never brought out, and that the qualifications and duties of deacons were not suggested, and the duty of singing, praying and giving were not urged. I insisted that the people that trusted Christ, felt that they were on safe ground, could never fall away, were baptized and were satisfied.

In reply, our good pastor called my attention to the fact that at the first Saturday meeting after the revival he preached a sermon on the duties of church members. So he did, and I admit it, but very few of our members were present. Most of those who joined were young people, and they, as a general thing, understand that the business of the church is to be done by older members, and therefore waited till Sunday. So they missed that good sermon that so edified me and Sallie Collins and the two dozen that heard it. He reminded us also of the sermon he preached the following Sunday at 11 o'clock on: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." But there had been a grand rally of the Farmers' Alliance in Black Jack Ridge neighborhood on Friday and Saturday before, and then some high degree in Masonry was conferred in the Black Jack Ridge lodge on Saturday night, which kept two of our deacons

and quite a number of the brethren at the lodge till twelve o'clock at night, and the pastor was over half through with his sermon when they came in on Sunday. No fewer were the tracks on the farm, and no less attention given to idle gossip or the rounding up of stock. Having seen that the members were inclined to the world soon after this protracted meeting, the good pastor prepared himself thoroughly, and made a most exhaustive examination of the Bible on the subject of giving. Bro. Brooks is a wonderful preacher. I never heard any of your doctors of divinity or city preachers handle that subject so well. By the space of an hour and three-quarters, by the watch, he showed that God gave Christ, Christ gave life and salvation, the Spirit gave revelation and the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, the earth gave, the clouds gave, and everything sent from God was on a mission to give. I whispered to Sallie Collins, as the pastor was closing, that I had a mind to get up and make a proposition to bear half the expenses of Sleepy Hollow Mission, half the expenses of a missionary to the heathen, half the expenses of a young preacher in the Seminary, and double my subscription to the pastor's salary. But the dear, wise woman said it might not be appreciated and seconded, and that we had better deliberate on it. Now

it so happened that the weather was not good that day, and the more prudent brethren were not there. Deacon Jones' five hundred acre farm never felt the effect of that sermon, and Deacon Smith's farm and five thousand dollars at interest were not laid under any additional contributions. I told Bro. Brooks that he had better take my advice, and if the brethren ever did enjoy another revival, that he had better continue the meeting a little longer, and while they were present and impressible to repeat his sermons on holy living, Sabbath desecration and giving to the Lord.

Sallie Collins said she never did hear me talk with such power, that my spirit was calm and Christian, that my argument was unanswerable, and that I showed none of the elements of a groweler and fault-finder. Our good pastor always treated me with marked respect and kindness afterwards. But this is enough for the present.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER FOUR.

DESCRIPTION OF BROTHER BROOKS—TROUBLES
BY COMPANIES—A NEW ROOSTER—JERE-
MIAH SPEAKWELL—A NEW BROOM—GOOD
ADVICE.

If ever people did love a pastor, Sallie Collins and I love Brother Brooks. He is humble and candid and sensible. He hears advice kindly. He does not seem to know everything and does not seem set in his ways so that he is unwilling to give up his plans for better ones. He is a good pastor. He is far over the average. He talks kindly to children and appeals to young people in his preaching. He never seems to forget the poor and unfortunate and is full of sacrifice. He would make a first-class martyr, if required. But he did not enjoy early education. He has a large family and has so much riding to do in connection with his labor and anxiety in providing for his family, that he has not been able in the past, and can not now give the attention to study and

to reading good books and papers, and to the preparation of his sermons, that he thinks necessary. With all his disadvantages, he is a wonderful preacher. He sticks to the Bible and is always in earnest. Now that we have got used to him and love him so much, it would be a source of much regret to Sallie Collins and myself, if we were compelled to change pastors.

Well, it seems that troubles generally come in companies, and sometimes in regiments. You know I told you that our brethren were great folks for peace. If anybody said anything about discipline or new enterprises he was cried down as a man with new-fangled notions trying to disturb the harmony of the body. I was afraid their way of doing would not turn out well, but as I was yet put down among the new comers, I had to be quiet. No use for a man to put his finger in the fire with his eyes wide open. I may be more prudent than faithful, but Sallie Collins, my good wife and faithful counselor, has always told me that it was bad policy for a new rooster to flap his wings and crow much about the barn yard till all the chickens got used to him. Notwithstanding my good intentions, she says I am in danger of going too fast. She has studied closely the character of the apostles and some-

times warns me of the imperfections of one and then another, but generally winds up with Peter. I only wish I were as good a man.

Well, as I began to tell you, it leaked out somehow that our pastor was a little discouraged and was thinking of offering his resignation. Previous to the night he spent with us he did leave such an impression, but we reasoned him out of it. In fact the whole church was unanimous in wanting him to stay. It is now nearly two months since the night he stayed at our house. How the news got out I don't know, but still a brother, Jeremiah Speakwell, came into the neighborhood of Black Jack Ridge and spent a week, taking in our regular conference. He is a Baptist preacher and a man of very fine appearance and pleasing manners. Black Jack Ridge church has a fine reputation for a country church. Lands are pretty good, society is over the average and brethren believe in peace. Hearing of Brother Brooks and his discouragements, Brother Speakwell wrote letters to several of the brethren and fully and freely expressed his desire to change his field of labor for one that promised more development. Some churches have a singular way of sending in the resignation of their pastors and some preachers have a curious way of calling themselves to the care of churches before they say

so much to the old pastor as "by your leave sir." Brother Speakwell is a good man, but if he had such a wife as my wife, Sallie Collins, she would not let him do as he did at Black Jack Ridge.

Brother Brooks came to our last meeting looking hopeful, and to some of us his face was as it had been the face of an angel. Evidently he had prayed much and his heart was full of the Gospel. Being introduced at once to Bro. Speakwell, from the adjoining county, the new preacher was put forward to preach. A new broom sweeps clean. His voice was mellow, tears at times glistened in his eyes, and he spoke with great ease and fluency. Brethren gathered round him after the sermon, and some said one thing and some said another. They generally agreed that he had the right name. They all said he wept like Jeremiah and could *speak well*. All agreed, and nobody with more earnestness than our pastor, that he must preach on Sunday, the next day. Just as I was about to go up and join the rest in shaking hands and congratulations, Sallie Collins took hold of my hand and in a quiet way said, "better wait and hear him again." He preached on Sunday with good effect, but with less power than he did on Saturday, and, as our pastor was compelled to go

home Monday, Brother Speakwell stayed over most of the week. While here he got acquainted with almost everybody, and since he went away scarcely a mail is opened without letters from him to one or more of our members. Many are comparing his preaching with that of our pastor. Others say if Bro. Brooks should resign they are in favor of Bro. Speakwell and Sallie Collins says the whole thing means mischief.

Now I ask you some questions: Who ought to do the courting, the church or the preacher? Do you think it is right for one man to court another man's wife? What do you think of a church that does a good and faithful pastor a wrong? What do you think of a preacher that just tramps, tramps, tramps in search of a field of labor, and when he finds it can not keep it as long as it took him to find it? Sallie Collins has asked me these questions over and over again.

We have written to Bro. Brooks to come and stay all night with us again at his next appointment. Please advise us what to say to him.

The prophet's little chamber is ready for you at any time you can visit us.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER FIVE.

A PERMISSIVE DECREE—A MANY SIDED PREACHER—SETTLING A PASTOR—SIGNS OF REVIVAL.

Our invitation was accepted and our good pastor, Brother Brooks, spent another night with us previous to the regular appointment. When he heard that Bro. Speakwell was in such good repute among the brethren of Black Jack Ridge Church, and by reason, further, of the fact that other churches closer to him were calling loudly for his services, he at once expressed the feeling that perhaps the coming of Bro. Speakwell was of the Lord. The feeling had been growing on me ever since Sallie Collins warned me after his first sermon, that the coming of the new preacher was one of the Lord's "permissive decrees," our old Kentucky preacher used to talk about.

We persuaded our pastor to hold on and see more about the matter before he took any steps, especially since the brethren only spoke of calling Brother Speakwell in the event a resig-

nation was decided upon. It is now more than two months since Brother Speakwell left and we are, thank the Lord, a unit in keeping our pastor. Nothing immoral has been heard of the brother seeking a new field, but the information received shows that he would not suit Black Jack Ridge church at all. Though he is in middle life, we hear that he has been nearly everywhere and has been engaged in almost every kind of business. He began preaching when young. Not being supported at the start quite as well as some young men with whom he was brought up, who were in merchandise, and law, and medicine, he taught school a couple of years in four different neighborhoods, five months each, with only partial success. Then he tried farming. He studied law and ran life insurance. He has been a book agent, has sold sewing machines, and spent one year selling lightning rods. He has lived in four states, has been preaching twenty years, has been pastor of thirty churches and has still not found a field that exactly suits him. He is evidently a good man. He is sociable and converses freely on a great variety of questions. He remembered names well and seemed to know almost everybody of any prominence in every State in which he had lived. He was ready to give advice on almost every subject.

He seemed to know how to raise colts and pigs, how to cultivate every species of grain, such as oats, wheat, millet, rice and corn, and as to cotton and sugar planting and raising, he seemed so full of information that Deacon Jones and Brown became so excited under his vivid description of the fortunes that might be accumulated that they came well nigh adopting the schemes Brother Speakwell presented and putting all they had in a big sugar farm. His theories on school teaching and raising boys were just splendid. But when Sallie Collins heard him for about two hours and measured him fully, she simply said that he knew a good deal and could tell it, that he had a better education than good Brother Brooks, but that he seemed to talk with more interest about anything else than religion and church matters. That was as far as she would allow her prudent tongue to run. We have generally settled down in the belief at Black Jack Ridge that men who succeed in preaching are those who give up law, medicine, farming, merchandising and teaching school to other people. The coming of our strange brother, seeking a new field, has done us good. The sentiment prevails that we are amply able to support a preacher for at least half his time, and that if Brother Brooks will consent we will move him

nearer to us. I feel sure that the spirit of revival is upon us. Our pastor has just written us a good letter. He thinks good would come of a series of meetings and urges us to pray for a refreshing. How I long for it. That Sleepy Hollow mission is still on my heart. If our present membership of one hundred could be doubled and our brethren convinced of their duty and opportunity, we might have preaching every Sunday at Black Jack Ridge church and make it a center for a grand work. I am going to pray for rain, good crops of every kind and a spirit of conversion.

I am feeling more at home and more liberty among the brethren than formerly. They do not seem afraid of me and my ways as once they did. Although they still think I am an enthusiast and disposed to go a little fast on some things, they say I mean well and have a clear headed, deliberate wife that can be trusted. If we fail to have a good meeting soon I shall be greatly disappointed. Brother Brooks did not say a word about any evangelist or new preacher in his letter about the meeting, and I hope the brethren will not put it in his head. He sees clearly the defects in the preaching and general management of our last revival and I am sure things will go right, if he has full control of another revival. I am not

at all opposed to evangelists and by no means against our pastor getting help when he needs it; but the condition of our church is such, just now, that I want to see the membership develope while sinners are being saved.

Our Sunday School did not go into winter quarters this year, as usual. Sallie Collins helped me talk it out of them. The school is small, but is growing. Enclosed I send you fifteen dollars for Sunday school papers. You will find also enclosed ten dollars for foreign missions my good wife collected, and the money for ten new subscribers for the TEXAS BAPTIST AND HERALD. The signs seem every way favorable and we are expecting a great blessing.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER SIX.

FAITHFUL PREACHING—THE GREAT CHANGE—
DEMIJOHNOCRAT—SKINFLINT—THE REVI-
VAL—SERMON REPEATED—BENEVOLENCE
DEVELOPED.

There is nothing that is so healthful in a community as the gospel faithfully preached, believed and acted out. When the present pastor took charge of Black Jack church, the Sabbath was poorly observed. Behold the change. People are now suspicious of a man who refuses to go to church on Sunday, and who, instead of attending worship, gives a large part of the day to looking after his farming and stock interests, as many formerly did. It is disreputable to swear in the presence of Christian people. These people always had some respect for the feelings of the preacher, but none on this line for the average Christian. Such a pressure has been brought to bear in the church, in a loving way, that our deacon and a few of his old associates in the business, say that noboby need ever expect to see them

sneaking into another saloon and slipping out like criminals. The change is charming. When I talk about discipline in the church, about the mission on Sleepy Hollow, and about paying our pastor a good salary, and paying it punctually, they do not sneer at me and call me an enthusiast and crank as they did. There are a good many things to be done yet, but I tell you a wonderful change for the better has come over our neighborhood. Old man Demijohnocrat, who has been keeping whisky at the cross-roads, says he is going to move for want of business. In every state and neighborhood where I have lived, the sale of whisky is limited, if you can keep all the church members away and get them to use their influence against the grogshop and its business. Old man Skinflint says he will have to move too. The reasons he gives are right funny. First, he says he is not noticed and associated with as much as formerly. He has plenty of money, a large farm, a big house and lots of children. A few years ago, he used to have pretty much his own way. But when the people in this section began to feel the need of churches and school-houses, not a bit of encouragement did they get from him. He regarded those things as luxuries and things that cities might indulge in. He was willing to give a dollar toward a plain,

unpainted board house, and was in favor of using it for all public purposes. School could be taught in it five days in the week. The churches of the different denominations could use it one Saturday and Sunday in the month. The temperance order could have it one night, but his dollar could not go into it unless the young folks be allowed to dance in it every Friday night. The fact was at once apparent that the reason he offered his dollar was to get a place for the young folks to frolic away from his house. Another reason he assigns for leaving is that he has lost his influence. He says he cannot afford to become a Christian since he sees how much the Black Jack Ridge people are expecting a man to give. He says the school and church folks have got the day, and his property is for sale. It is amazing how much real evil two such men as Demijohnocrat and Skinflint can do in a community. We can afford to hold a meeting and welcome their departure. How sorry I am for the neighborhood in which they settle. All we can do is to send out a missionary after them and root them up again. This we will do if the Lord permit. Sallie Collins says she will stick to me in all such abor. I tell you, brother Hayden, this thing of

working for Christ and against the Devil is getting to be a perfect luxury. In the future, I am determined to make things lively.

The immediate cause of all this lies in the fact that Bro. Brooks came and held the meeting I wrote you about once before. It lasted thirty days. It was powerful. In the very beginning of the meeting, he drew the lines between the church and the world, just like the Bible has it. Some of the members got mad, but they soon got sorry, and repented and confessed. Our pastor did not say anything about sending off for another preacher, and nobody suggested it. The brethren were soon alive to the work, and did a great deal of preaching themselves. When the preacher got through one morning, preaching on the value of keeping our Christian professions, having read and commented at length on our church covenant, one after another of the brethren who had been tippling at home and giving their influence to Demijohnocrat, confessed their sins, asked forgiveness and proposed that hereafter the church would be considered a total abstinence temperance organization,

On another occasion when the pastor, to a full house, at my request, repeated his sermon on giving, with great power, covetous men in our church cried aloud for mercy. Some said

publicly that they intended to give one-tenth of their income to the cause of religion; others said a bale of cotton, some one thing and some another, while the deacon, who has the largest farm of any, and five thousand dollars at interest, and who has been neighbor to and much under the influence of old man Skinflint, stood up in tears, and said that as he had lost so much time, he intended to devote one-fifth of his income to the gospel of Jesus.

While our pastor was preaching repentance to Christians he kept before the minds of sinners the statement of Christ: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." While in every sermon he said: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," he never failed to repeat, "He that believeth not, shall be damned." He was deliberate. He took time. He gave to each his portion in due season. He preached the law and repentance, and faith, and duty to God, the church and the world.

Tell Bro. Holt to draw on Black Jack Ridge church for one hundred dollars. Bro. Hawthorne and Bro. Ray and the agents for colleges would do well to visit us. I have some money myself for all these objects, and Sallie Collins says if I do not get rid of it soon, it will burn a hole in my pocket.

The result of the meeting is as follows: We baptised forty-seven. Two of our old members convinced the church that they were baptised at first without conversion, and asked that baptism be repeated, so that the ordinance might follow repentance and faith, instead of preceding them.

Some of our members are off the track yet and in my next I will tell you their opinion and mine about all these agents that are going over Texas begging the people for money for missions and education, newspapers and church houses.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER SEVEN.

WHAT IS AN AGENT—THE BEST FEELING—THE
WORST FEELING—MOTIVES IN GIVING—NEC-
CESSARY EVILS—IRON JACKET—PREACHER
FROM MISSISSIPPI—POINTED QUESTIONS.

In the old field school, in the days of my boyhood, I was taught that an agent was an actor or doer. That definition is a good one for these beggars who are compassing land and sea for money for Baptist enterprises. Some of them do and some overdo. The best feeling I ever had in my life, except the one I had when I found out I was a Christian, was when I had some of the Lord's money on hand and the agent for missions called for it in the name and for the sake of Christ. The worst feeling that I ever had, next to the one that distressed me when I found out that I was lost, was when the agent came up on me without a cent of money on hand. I was coming from town after having sold my half crop at half price, spent all the money to pay my debts and got a scant supply for my family, with a drouth

staring me in the face and with a less supply of religion on hand than money or credit. To add to my torture the good brother agent looked at his side of the question all the time and would not consider my side at all. Some gifted but misguided brother had told him that I was in fine circumstances and could give largely if I would. Because of that statement the agent did not believe a word I said as to my inability to give as I would like. He showed that he was thinking of exhibiting success in his report, and was willing to sacrifice me in my poverty, if that would make him appear as a successful agent. My pain was most intolerable when he pressed upon me unchristian motives. He appealed to my worldly pride. He said if I had no money and would make a large subscription that the Lord would give me a large crop and great prosperity in all temporal matters. Having appealed to my pride and to my avarice and still not reaching me he at first was impatient and afterwards exhibited ill temper and a little venom. I do not think I will be able either in this world or the world to come to tell you how badly I felt.

A man cannot always be ready to give to all the objects presented to him. The man who promises and does not pay is a much worse sinner than the man who refuses to promise in

the face of short crops and drouth and afterward gives as the Lord has prospered him.

Far be it from me to say anything against agencies. They are necessary evils, like lawyers and beggars and children. If you want anything done you must have somebody to do it. So it requires the appointment of an agent or doer. An engine requires an engineer. A man made it, a man must run it. As railroads and farms and factories and stores must have men to organize and otherwise manipulate them, so must our educational and mission enterprises have men to operate them. The plan of salvation required an agent. Jesus Christ was sent to lay the foundation of it. To apply the remedy for sin required another agent to follow up the first one in quick succession and hence the Holy Spirit was sent to make a revelation and to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us. Every successful enterprise on earth, material, intellectual and spiritual, demands an agent. All agents that eat and wear clothes must be supported from the results of their labor, or the ox is muzzled that treads out the corn.

Everybody in Black Jack Ridge church says he is a missionary, warp and filling. Old brother Iron Jacket preaches in our neighborhood occasionally and though many of our

members smile at his odd ways and old foggy notions some of them enjoy his sermons best when he is picking at Sunday-schools and agencies. We had a preacher recently come from Mississippi, who says he was born in North Carolina and lived five years in Tennessee; who goes through our agencies, or rather as he says, the way they run things, and occasionally gives our pastor a tilt on the sly. He says he has been moderator of two associations in the old states and seems to be a regular sore head because he is not in greater demand in Texas. He says these agents are eating the life out of us and that our pastors in Texas are paid entirely too much money. He says further that these men are getting more than twice as much as he received in the old states. Three or four of our members have fallen in with this brother and they are making things a little interesting.

One thing I wish you would tell me: What can be done to make the people go to meeting, quietly listen to a man for an hour and a half, and after the sermon flatter him, ask him home with them and beg him to preach as often as possible for them, when he raves and rants, repeats a good amount of scripture and yet makes manifest to an average Texas congregation that he is an ignoramus, an egotist and

a sore-head. What is the reason that a preacher coming into a church that has a pastor that he is not satisfied with cannot wait and be quiet like other mortals. I am afraid that this case will give us trouble. A few of our members refuse to take your paper because you say so much about money. These same few get encouragement from the new preacher and refuse to give anything for colleges and foreign missions.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER EIGHT.

THE ORGAN—NEW COMERS—A SUPPER—THE
HORNET'S NEST—OBJECTIONS—THE FID-
DLER—A COMPROMISE.

Do people in cities like Dallas and Waco have as much trouble as they do in the country churches? We are just now sorely distressed over a sixty-five dollar organ. Some of our Sunday-school teachers recently decided that our singing could be improved by getting an organ. A young lady has recently moved in who plays well, and volunteered her services. The ladies of the church at once decided to give a supper and have a social, good time and thus raise the necessary amount of money. Everything seemed lovely. But some how I felt that it would not work well. I told Sallie Collins of my fears and some things I thought of saying and doing. She urged me to be quiet, seeing that the ladies were determined to have that organ and that if I opposed their plans I would get myself into a hornet's nest. Remem-

bering my experience in Georgia when a boy, just after I had thrown a rock at a hornet's nest I subsided. The supper brought forty dollars and a committee was at once appointed to raise the other twenty-five dollars and make the purchase. All this was done without any vote or even discussion in Sunday-school or church conference.

When the committee of ladies began to wait on the brethren and solicit aid, objections began to come out. If you want a man to find faults by the dozen ask him to pay money for something he does not believe in. The deacon said that he would give nothing because the church had not been consulted. I could not very well aid the enterprise, not because I was opposed to the organ, but because the young lady who was to play it was not a Christian, and in the organization she was working up for a choir, the majority of the singers were not only unconverted people, but the best dancers in the neighborhood, including the fiddler. Some of the brethren have concluded that the use of the organ in worship was unscriptural and this party is lead by our sore-headed preacher.

So confident were the ladies that the money would be raised that the organ was bought and is on the ground. I have just learned that the fiddler was so outraged at the

opposition of the brethren that he has gone to the rescue and raised the additional amount and is ready to lend a helping hand to aid the good work.

I am almost sorry I ever came into the neighborhood. You never did see such a stir. Some of these good folks are calling each other by hard names. Motives are called in questions, and it looks like the church will be broken up. But then I know it will not.

Oh, if these ladies had gone at the start to the old deacons and brethren who had the money to pay, and got them committed to it, all this could have been avoided. The supper was not a necessity. That wordly minded woman and the fiddler should never have been mentioned in this connection. The sixty-five dollars could have been raised in sixty-five minutes and old sister Jones, a poor widow, one of our best members, has a daughter who was baptised during our last protracted meeting, who, with a little encouragement would make a good organist. With that management this opposition would not have appeared and our sore-headed brother who is always ready to lead an opposition would have been without excuse.

We have got to compromise this matter in some way and Sallie Collins and I have this

plan:—First, put the whole matter before Bro. Brooks and the church in open conference. Tell them plainly to pay for the organ and take charge of it. Let that fiddler and his crowd out, till they are made Christians. Put in Miss Jones and, as her mother is poor, raise twenty-five dollars to give her music lessons. Let the members of the church run the business and worship of the church, and never forget to put a premium on piety. When we want money for anything I am in favor of raising it by direct donation without these suppers and concerts and mixing up so much with the world and worldly customs. Besides the authority of the church must be respected.

If there is anything wrong in this programme I wish you would write to me. If you do not point out my error I am going to present this plan at the next meeting and will report results.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER NINE.

PIETY TO THE FRONT—SATAN'S INVENTION—
THINGS OUT OF PLACE—A GOOD SPEECH—
THE ENEMY ROUTED—A THREAT—THE
DANCING SCHOOL.

Satan certainly has a great many ways to vex a country church. Sometimes I am almost tempted to move to town. From what little time I have spent in towns and cities my observation is that the people seem too busy to stir up troubles such as afflict us in the country. One thing I have learned and learned by heart, and that is that nothing but old fashioned, Bible, experimental religion can be relied on in a country church to keep things straight. It is just as necessary to have converted, pious singers and collectors of church and Sunday-school and missionary money as it is to have a converted preacher or deacon. As sure as your name is written in your mother's Bible and on the church book, Sam Hayden, I am as settled on this as the everlasting rock of Gibraltar.

I do not believe that Sallie Collins and brother Brooks combined could change my mind if they were to try. It takes only a wee bit of pride and wordly mindēness and selfishness to stir up a fuss in a church choir that will upset the whole church and make it a stench in the nostrils of a whole community. The idea of putting a man or a woman in a prominent place in church worship to sing to the people "Come to Jesus," who is a stranger to grace and has only taken a position in the singing to accomplish worldly ends, is preposterous. To start out a lot of unconverted, giddy, foolish boys and girls to get up money for religious purposes, is one of the best tricks the devil ever invented. Just think of a man that will swear, brand calves on Sunday and get his eyes occasionally tangled with mean whiskey; or a dancing, fashionable, frolicking woman going through the neighborhood begging money for a church or Sunday school organ, or anything else in the name of Jesus Christ. Why, you might as well try to convince me that the moon is made of green cheese, that cucumbers will grow and mature in the midst of ice, or that water will run up hill of its own free will; as that the Lord of glory will smile on any such combinations. I have seen things out of place, such as a dog at church, a cat in the pantry or a pig

in the watermelon patch, but I have yet to see anything, in my judgment, farther from its proper place than a petted, silly, sensitive, unconverted, seventeen-year-old girl at an organ, leading the singing in a country congregation, where a hundred pious people under old-fashioned Baptist influences want to take part in the worship of song. Better to have an organ, a brass horn with flute and violin thrown in, than have such a leader in the singing as I have described.

As we heard nothing from you, we got that organ question before the pastor and church just as suggested. Brother Brooks made the best speech I ever heard. It got noised about some how that the question would be up at conference and everybody went to the Saturday meeting, even Demijohnocrat, Skinflint and the fiddler. By these three and a number of others hopes were entertained that the church would be broken up. Instead of a row and fun for the spectators, when dear Brother Brooks was through with his speech, almost all the members of the church were in tears. Demijohnocrat and Skin Flint were so chilled with fear that they looked pale as marble statues and the fiddler looked as though he could crawl out through a half-inch augur hole. Oh the triumph of the truth and the spirit of the

gospel. The works of the flesh and the Spirit were presented by our dear pastor as I never before heard or understood it. As he went along everybody could see just where Satan got in amongst us and just how he had to be put out. The authority of the church was clearly brought out, and also the difference between matters of principle and policy. Then the trouble was fairly before the church. All of us saw that the spirit of the gospel in this case required concession. Since the matter was left with the church the old brethren who made objections to the organ coming in, on the ground that the church authority had been set at naught, all agreed that if a majority of the church voted it in, then all right. The brethren generally admitted that church music was scriptural either with or without an instrument. Our school teacher was appealed to, who knows something about Greek, and he says that the word used by Paul when he speaks of singing psalms requires the use of an instrument. Even our sore-headed preacher did not controvert this position. I made my objections to putting unconverted singers in charge of the music and suggested that we raise twenty-five dollars to give the pious widow's pious daughter music lessons a few months to enable her without embarrassment to play the organ. This was

accepted and the whole matter was promptly settled. The more we argued the nearer we got together; and the happier we were in the settlement of this trouble the more restless Demijohnocrat, Skin Flint and the fiddler appeared. When, at the suggestion of our pastor, we began to give each other the hand of fellowship, on the ground that all past differences were buried, and that shoulder to shoulder we would stand in defense of the gospel, these three worthies retired in a body. The settlement of that difficulty was the happiest day Black Jack Ridge church ever had. All went there sad, excepting Demijohnocrat, Skinflint and the fiddler, and all except these gentleman and a few of their sympathizers went away happy.

When you think you have got Satan routed and he seems to be hanging his head in mortification and shame, he will slip around the corner, spit on his hands and, before you know it, take a fresh hold on you. The young woman who presided so gracefully at the supper when the fifty dollars for the organ was secured, and who expected to run our church music, is dreadfully disappointed and says the church need never expect her influence in the future. The fiddler and she together have alienated about half a dozen of our young members

who were brought in at our last protracted meeting, and after convincing them that the church and pastor Brooks were an old foggy set, have induced three of our young members to dance. The young woman insists that it is a very innocent and healthful pastime, and that in the cities the educated and refined people in the churches engage in it. The fiddler and she are making up a dancing school. Having induced three to dance, they report that two of our members have subscribed their children as scholars. Whiskey and avarice and pleasure in the persons of Demijohnocrat, Skinflint and the fiddler, have joined hands for the final assault on the Black Jack Ridge church. We will see what we will see. In the Lord is my trust.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER TEN.

THINGS OVERDONE—SMART CHILDREN—THE
COUNTRY DANCE—LATE HOURS—THE RE-
ACTION—THE CONVERSATION—THE SWEET
VOICE.

The devil sometimes behaves very decently ; at others he overdoes things. When a right smart woman has a right smart baby that she wants to show off in company, he is liable to do and say things that are embarrassing to see or hear. So, at times, Satan shows off his children to a bad advantage. Very few people can always keep their children within desired bounds. Under ordinary circumstances, the father of liars and murderers want his children to be respectable. The more they act as leaders in society, the better they sing, the more skillfully they play on wind or stringed instruments the more is he delighted. If put at the head of a Sunday-school class, he would have his child study carefully the

letter of the lesson but avoid its spirit. If you will allow he will put a teacher at the head of every class in school, appoint an organist, and will even venture to suggest a superintendent and pastor. He will put them all in on their good behavior. If any of his children drink whiskey he will advise them to abstain from it long enough beforehand so that the breath will not be made offensive during religious service. He would be very much displeased if one of his family should openly swear in church or otherwise make himself offensive to pious people.

After we got our organ difficulty all settled and everything in Black Jack Ridge church was moving smoothly on, old man Skinflint opened his house for a big dance and they had it. Demijohnocrat had a side-show with plenty of the needful to give away if parties did not feel able to buy. Things went merrily. Some of our alienated young members attended, and two or three engaged in the dance. Between sets, while the young men loaded up on mean whiskey, the fiddler drummed up a class for a dancing-school, which Skinflint, in his wrath against the church and its pastor and his zeal for the position of leadership in

society, which he had lost but was regaining, agreed should be taught at his house. Things moved charmingly to some people. Two of our members actually subscribed their children as scholars in that school. Twelve o'clock was suggested as the proper time to close. Another set was urged. Liquor and the dance and the success of a cause temporarily that was struggling for position, stimulated the leaders. At two o'clock only about half had gone home, and things that occurred along the way home that dark night were freely discussed during the following week. The fruit of that one night's work was jealousy, a black eye, the first drink, the first cigar, the daughter of a church member brought home late at night by a young man full of whiskey, and several other things which the best people of Black Jack Ridge do not think promote the morals of the community. The thing was overdone and the devil himself was sorry that the affair was not better managed.

The reaction was powerful. Some were indignant. A few talked of violence. The conservative element prevailed under good council, and altogether, Bro. Brooks said in a sermon that God had made the wrath of

man to praise Him on Black Jack Ridge as signally as he did at the Red Sea when Israel sang:

"The horse and his rider hath he
Thrown into the sea."

The vast congregation that came to our next meeting after the dance, the earnest attention to preaching, and the number that rose for prayer among even those who so recently were with the enemy, showed that we were on the eve of a great revival. Nobody saw this sooner than Demijohnocrat, Skinflint and the fiddler. The dancing-school never met. The whisky-shop has closed. Skinflint has sold out and is gone. We suppose the dancing master accompanied them. We are glad they are gone but sorry for the people where they settle.

During all these months of struggle and anxiety for so many of us it was a source of amusement to me that our dear brother Brooks did not get discouraged and quit. But for him and Sallie Collins I would have sold out and moved a half dozen times. They were right and I wrong, as usual. I have thought a good deal of late about the patience of Job, the meekness of Moses and the forbearance of Jesus, and

finding these graces united in our pastor, with the faith of Abraham nerving his heart, thanked God that good and faithful brother Brooks was ever sent to Black Jack Ridge Church, and that Sallie Collins and her unworthy husband Jake were the blessed recipients of his ministry.

We have at last induced the church to settle brother Brooks among us. He is to preach for us at Black Jack Ridge Church two Sundays, at Sleepy Hollow one Sunday where we have a Mission Sunday-school, and at Shady Grove, five miles from our church in the opposite direction, where we are to build a house and start a second Mission Sunday-school. Since this arrangement we have baptisms nearly every meeting, and we are arranging for another series of revival meetings. Brother Brooks counseled moderation and kindness toward our erring young members who were led away by the dance. He felt positive about their conversion originally. Sure enough they did, every one of them. The young woman who was assisted by the church in taking lessons on the organ appreciated what we did for her, learned rapidly and is playing nicely, giving general satisfaction.

Our new comers stood aloof from us for awhile after the dance. The young lady who was so active in getting the organ seemed greatly mortified and declined to take any further part in the Sunday-school. Many people apprehended they would move, but they did not. Though some people associated them with Demijohnocrat, Skinflint and that fiddler it was a mistake. They are much better people and a little kindness shown them has brought out the fact.

A few Sundays ago when Brother Brooks in his powerful and earnest way was showing the only path that led to real pleasure and at the same time exposed the emptiness of all worldly joy, that beautiful woman who led the sociable and led the dance wept aloud. Brother Brooks broke down in his sermon. We kneeled in prayer for her alone. The pressure on us was greater than I had ever felt. I felt as if I would die. The pains of hell seemed to get hold upon me as I suffered and prayed for the conversion of that woman. It is true that Sallie Collins sat by me and prayed and wept, but she kept saying: "Thank God, I knew all would come out right." Three prayers were offered. I never

heard the brethren offer such prayers before. At the close of the third prayer I felt a great weight pass from my heart; a seeming dark cloud parted above me; I was trusting Jesus; a sweet peace was in my soul; I was happy. Everybody was quiet. There was neither singing nor talking. Over the congregation floated the sweet voice of that beautiful young woman, as she said, "Bless the Lord, I am saved." The scene that followed I cannot describe; I will not try. I am so glad I moved from Georgia to Black Jack Ridge, that I ever met Bro. Brooks, that I ever saw that young woman and witnessed her conversion and that Sallie Collins has been such a help to me in so many ways.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER ELEVEN.

PROFITABLE VISIT—APPRECIATION—SICKNESS AND DEATH OF LITTLE SAM.

Your letters to us have always been welcome, but your visit two months ago was an era in the history of our family. The children and Sallie Collins have talked a great deal about you. It did me good to hear you tell how you enjoyed our country fare. Of course she is a good cook, and then that preacher's room is nice enough for anybody. You had sense enough to appreciate it all and to let the dear good woman and children know that you were grateful for their attention. I am surprised at the way some preachers do who are allowed to occupy that room. They act as though everything on the place belonged to them. They order everything they want, and act as though Sallie Collins and these children were theirs instead of mine. They thank no one for anything and are

officious enough to make everyone glad when they are gone. I have lived long enough to love common sense and politeness. Ever since you left the little boys have been telling how you admired their colts and calves and pigs, and which you thought was the best. It amuses them yet that you made such a mistake as to which cow would give the most milk. Then, too, our precious little girls have never finished telling how you admired their flowers and bragged on their little playhouses, covered with vines. If the preachers would show their appreciation of women and children as you did on your visit to Black Jack Ridge they would have a better influence on society, and we would soon have better society to live in.

Your words of encouragement did the whole church and community good. You spoke kindly of Bro. Brooks. How dear that good man is to me and Sallie Collins. You said the church acted wisely in keeping him as pastor and settling him in the neighborhood. All that I knew before, but it did a heap of good for you to say so. Heap of difference between opinion of Bro. Hayden, the editor of our State paper, and Jake Collins. You commend the church for the manner in which that organ question was settled, and for the

forbearance shown those young members who have been reclaimed from dancing, and for establishing the missions at Sleepy Hollow and Shady Grove.

It pains my heart to tell you of our great loss. You know we had five children, aged respectively twelve, ten and four, and two girls, six and eight years old. Only a week or two after you left, little Sam, our four-year-old baby boy, was taken sick. You made a wonderful impression on his mind. I can see him now, sitting on your knee, hearing you tell those Bible stories of Joseph and Moses and Samuel and Jesus. After you went away he talked about what he had heard, and continued to ask questions. He asked if we thought he would ever be hated and sold like Joseph, and if God would take care of him like He did the little baby Moses, and if the Lord would ever let him preach like little Samuel and after he was dead let him go to live with Jesus. He tried to do like you said, and after you went away, kept on saying he intended to mind his mother, be a good boy, love his brothers and sisters, and ask Jesus to save him. Sallie Collins called my attention to him frequently, and said it looked as if you had put a spell on him. He was patient and cheerful, and tried in every way to be useful. He got his little wagon broken

and lost his knife, and when he talked to his little dog; he would mention something you said and tell him to be good. While his knife was lost and his little wagon lay broken in the yard and his little dog whined about the yard because he missed little Sam, the poor little boy suffered with fever, grew worse every day and died. What a day!

We loved our first boy when he came, but never loved any as we did this one. His little chubby face and dimpled chin, his curly hair and dancing black eyes, his sweet words: "Water, water, mama," when he was burning up with fever, we cannot forget. Bro. Brooks and all our members went with us and put him in his little grave. They said all they could and did all they could, but I am crushed. It is the first one we have buried. Sallie Collins bears it better than I can, but poor creature, she cries nearly all the time and looks careworn and ten years older. Oh, God, have mercy on us, for our baby is dead and buried.

Since I saw that young lady converted I wrote you about and witnessed her baptism the next Sunday, I have had a stronger faith in God and in his gospel, but I know we can never entirely recover from the death of our baby boy. There is his hat just as he left it. His shoes are kept in the corner, with one string broken. His little

dog lies just opposite me, as I write, on the hearth, looking mournfully in the fire, and I verily believe is thinking of little Sam. The cricket chirps and the clock ticks sadly. Right here in this room he was born, here he suffered, cried for water and died. Out there in the yard lies his little broken wagon. We do not feel like letting it be moved or mended. If everybody who buries children suffers as we do, there is more sorrow in this world than I imagined.

One thing I know it has done for me. Heaven is brought nearer. It seems to me that rest at the end will be sweeter. The world seems less and Heaven seems dearer. It is more than a month since little Sam was buried. We have prayed, and at the same time studied this dark dispensation. We thought lately that we were settled at Black Jack Ridge for life. It will be hard to part with the church and Bro. Brooks, but as school here does not give us an opportunity to educate our children as we desire and as Sallie Collins, since the death of little Sam will not consent to be separated from any of the family, we have decided to sell out and move to town.

When we get there and get settled, you must come and see us. Of course our house will always have a room for the preacher. How

we will get along in town I hardly know. I suppose things will be a little awkward to us for a while, but it looks as if there was no other way to do. If we could move the turnip patch and orchard, and could have a place to keep our cows and had something to feed them on, and a few other conveniences, all would be well; but to go on a dry town lot and buy everything we eat and wear, will require a good deal of economy, mixed with some human suffering, I am afraid. But Sallie Collins says the children must be educated, that she will not be separated from them, that other people with as little sense as we have live in town, and so the experiment of a change will be made.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER TWELVE.

MOVING TO TOWN—PRUDENCE URGED—COON
HUNTING—EVERYBODY IN A HURRY—
LEFT—GOOD RESOLUTIONS.

The parting with the old home and the membership of Black Jack Ridge Church was an event in the history of the Collins family. I know they all like me better than they did a few years ago when they used to call me cranky and enthusiastic and say some harder things about me. They generally compliment me by saying, "Brother Jake meant well, if he does sometimes go too fast." By the way, that reminds me of the compliments a good colored brother paid a white preacher whose sermon he liked. He blessed the Lord for the coming of the white man and said "if he has got a *white* skin he has got a *black* heart." They all agreed that I did my part in keeping up the Black Jack Ridge Church and the missions, and yet I made some money every year. I brought Sallie Collins and her three children

with five thousand dollars from Georgia, and after selling out everything we did not wish to move, find myself in town, in a rented house, with ten thousand dollars in the National Bank. Sallie Collins thinks we had better go slow and see if we can afford to live in town before we buy a house and engage in business. Of course I think we have come to stay and was in favor of buying a house and a stock of goods of some sort at once.

We have been here a month, have got acquainted with the pastor, Bro. Simpson, and quite a number of the members. We feel lonely and like strangers in a strange land. I wanted to go right up to the front seat as I did at Black Jack Ridge. Sallie Collins thought that would be imprudent, and urged me to go slow and be reserved.

My father kept hounds when I was a boy and I was very fond of hunting coons and foxes. I am a good deal like a young hound in the pack who was willing to undergo any kind of fatigue and take any amount of whipping for his freaks in the chase, but he always insisted on being in front in catching and killing the coon. Remembering the trouble and mortification of some of my former indiscretions, I was easily persuaded to occupy a seat with my family near the centre of the church house, The

children were a little timid, but were put in classes and rather liked the way things moved off. Everything seemed strange and I kept feeling more and more like a stranger. The books were all different, except the Bible, to what I was used to. The songs were different. Everything—the reading, and praying, and singing, and preaching—seemed cold and studied and formal. The pastor was different from Bro. Brooks—oh, so different! He introduced us to about half a dozen of the members. They shook hands with us and bowed very politely, and said they were glad to form our acquaintance, and hoped we would make ourselves at home and quickly passed out. Everybody seemed in a hurry, pastor and all, to get away. We could not help standing around a little after meeting, like we did at Black Jack Ridge. Presently all were gone and there we stood, waiting for something we knew not what. I felt a good deal like I did when I was a boy, the first time I went to town. I walked around in town reading the signs and waiting for somebody to speak to me and ask me some questions. Nobody seems to have time to talk with a stranger, even on Sunday. Here they went walking fast and driving faster. What on earth they were in such a hurry for I could not imagine. None of them had as far

to go in getting home as we did at Black Jack Ridge Church, nor half as much to do when they got there. Not one half of them has a cow to milk or feed, and if at all, not over one. But few of them have any chickens or pigs to look after when they get home. I do not believe they could give a sensible reason why they are in such a hurry to get from church. They could not be hungry. They eat breakfast later in town than we do in the country. The preaching begins exactly at eleven, fully an hour before Bro. Brooks could get the Black Jack Ridge people together. He preaches an hour and this town preacher, Simpson, is not allowed to preach but half an hour. Some of the town members talk of cutting him down to twenty minutes. I have shown that the haste is not to get home quick to get their dinners. Since service is so short it is not because they are tired sitting. We stayed at Black Jack Ridge two hours, and even then we did not hurry away.

The whole thing seemed so strange to me, that notwithstanding Sallie Collins told me to say nothing about it, I could not help inquiring into the matter. They laughed at me. Most of them seemed amused at my interest in the matter, while a few of them scolded. I made the following discovery: One said it was a

town custom. Another said that the people in town worked very hard and were in a hurry to get home to get off their fine tight clothes and put in a full evening resting. Another still gave us a reason that they hurried away to get ready for the Sunday evening strolling and riding and driving and amusements, this was all the time they had in the week for recreation. Things, I thought, were bad enough in the country, but a little investigation shows that a great majority of these people do not know what the Bible means when it says: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." I asked Bro. Simpson the first chance I had for his views on the subject. He and I did not disagree, but when I asked him to preach on the subject he said it would not be prudent to press our views of the Sabbath on the congregation at present.

How these town people do rush and worry! It is on the street just like it is at church. They will not take time to stop and discuss the situation with a stranger. The pastor goes rushing along the sidewalk like the cows and calves were together or the barn was on fire. He, like the rest of the people, does not seem to have time to do anything but run and rush to meet engagements. Never in this world did I dream that people could have so many engage-

ments! Formerly I have been to town right often, but generally on Monday and Saturday. On these days there is always a stir, but I did not suppose it was this way all the time, Sunday included. Do you suppose we ever will get acquainted with these people? We have been in town a whole month and we have formed few acquaintances. The pastor has called to see us once. He staid only a few minutes. Just about the time I began to be at myself and ready to discuss church matters, he bowed with us, without reading a single verse in the Bible or singing a single verse of a song, and offered a very short prayer and was gone. A few members have come and gone same hasty way. These are the busiest in the people I ever saw. These railroads and telegraphs and telephones and fast horses, and lightning express church services have got us in a whirl, and for once, Sallie Collins says I am beat. The old members at Black Jack Ridge used to say I was too fast, but I never will be able to keep up with these people. Two things I cannot afford: One is to get left, and the other is to be a sorehead. I simply mean by the help of the Lord to stay here and educate my children. So I intend to move heaven and earth to get adjusted to the ways of these people. We must get together. It is easier for

me to conform to their ways than for the whole town to conform to mine. We have passed the following resolutions: 1. We will not go in debt. 2. We will not join the grumblers. It is a true saying, that grumblers "never work, and workers never grumble." 3. We will stick to the church and always be on hand.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER THIRTEEN.

AN OBJECTOR—BUSINESS PRINCIPLES—A SHARP
CONTROVERSY.

Another month is gone. We have not yet bought a home, nor decided what business to follow for a living. Several things have been presented, but we want to be sure we are right. We are in no condition to be making mistakes. The money has been let out on call at a rate of interest that will support us, and is well secured. So as our living is secured without reducing our capital, there is no need for haste in getting into something we may wish we were out of.

The town is growing. We have two railroads and two more coming. Others are spoken of, and many enthusiastic people believe this is destined to be a railroad centre. Of course we are in the dark about such things. We like the school. Our boys are the life and joy of Sallie Collins. They are charmed with their teacher, and are beginning to talk of

college and learned professions. Sallie Collins is a plain country woman, but she is ambitious for learning and fame for her boys. She believes they are good stock, and she insists that there is more in the stock of folks than in the stock of horses or cattle. The school for girls is well managed. With four children on earth, being educated properly and at home every night, while we know that little Sam is in Heaven, we are reasonably well contented. Some people say I am fidgety and fussy, cranky and enthusiastic, but Sallie Collins says it is because I have a great many winning ways to make people misunderstand me. Right here I will venture to compose two lines of poetry:

I would rather be dead
Than to be a sorehead.

There is an old Brother in this town church that is a regular character. His name is Dolittle—George Washington Dolittle. He is a little man, with little eyes, a little mind, and I reckon a little soul. He is an old settler, and is particularly watchful over new comers. I am told that his family was the third that settled in the town. He bought originally five hundred acres joining the town tract and at that time got possession of several blocks between the town and the present location of the main depot. He is a regular sharper on

trade and he has sold alternate lots and exchanged and received large rates of interest until he is rich in bank stock and lands and lots and other town property. He says he did a great deal in helping the church erect the present house of worship. The members say he did not give a cent towards building the house. He owned the most eligible site for a church building about town. Twelve months before the church decided to build, the record shows that he gave two hundred dollars for our present church lot, one by two hundred feet, and made the church pay a thousand dollars for it. He still insists that the brethren ought to have given him two thousand. He seems to suffer a great deal in consequence of his sacrifice on that lot and often speaks of it sorrowfully. He has refused to help the church in a great many enterprises since, and always eases his conscience by referring to his heavy losses on that church lot. I am told he is not likely to recover from this shock. He complains all the time at the way the church is drifting. He objects to a preacher using notes, wearing a plug hat and gold watch chain. He objects to public collections of money for any purpose whatever, even for incidental expenses. He holds the theory of the right and left hand keeping secrets. He objects to

the organ and new songs, even in Sunday-school. He objects to evangelists and to a salary for preachers, either pastors or missionaries. He objects to having preaching every Sunday by the same man. He thinks that no preacher ought to have more for his services than a hired hand gets on a farm, and not by any means more than an average mechanic gets as a day laborer. He thinks it is blasphemous to associate the pay of a preacher with that of a contractor, lawyer, doctor, cashier in a bank, or head clerk in a store. He objects to baptizing in the baptistry in the church house, and insists that in every case we ought to go to the river five miles away. He objects to the pastor's wife wearing a silk dress or having a servant to do any of her house work. He objects to using any lesson helps in Sunday-school. He believes that the only literature in the school should be the Bible and hymn book with the old songs. He seems to prefer longmeter ones. He is opposed to foreign missions while there are any sinners at home unconverted, or poor people needing food or clothing. In fact, he feels called upon to sit down on men and measures generally. Sallie Collins is afraid of him, since he watches new comers so closely, and has already prophesied

that some day Brother Dolittle will sit down on me, if ever I attempt to do in town as I did at Black Jack Ridge. It really looks to me that he has things very much his own way. He owns a controlling interest in the bank; nearly all the members I find owe him borrowed money, and he actually has a lien on the church building for a thousand dollars. The pastor knowing all these things, is cramped, and feels that he is not equal to the situation. You had better believe that I am glad I do not owe Brother Dolittle anything but good will.

With all these objections, he is a good man. Occasionally, in his peculiar way, he helps some widow or orphan. By inquiring around, I find that he will have a good impulse and send a sack of flour, a bolt of calico and domestic, and is paying tuition and furnishing clothing and books for several orphans in school. About twice a year he sends a lot of things to the preacher, but insists that it must be reported as part of the salary. He will not subscribe a cent to anything. He is opposed to all plans of systematic benevolence. I believe that he hates book agents and sewing machine agents, and agents for missions and colleges as much as he hates the devil. It is strange that a man with a controlling interest in a bank, who advocates such rigid system in all

branches of business, should want to turn the Church of Christ into a school to teach confusion. It looks to me that if the preacher ought not to have a regular salary, the church ought not to demand any particular part of his time or any special Sundays for preaching. If one ought to be managed loosely and be an open question, so ought the other.

Business is business, and I for one am in favor of it in church matters as in everything else. I told Brother Dolittle plainly and frankly my position the other day on this question, and he as candidly said in reply that I was very outspoken for a new comer. I pointed out a corner lot, and indicated a desire to purchase it from him and engage in selling groceries. He fixed the price and I told him to make me a deed. He asked when to make the payments due. I told him to specify in the note that I would pay one thousand dollars for the lot, more or less, depending somewhat on my success in business, and that I would pay it along as I saw proper, that is to say I would pay him any money I did not need in running my business. He was indignant, angry and red in the face. But I quieted him by telling him, that was exactly the way he did the preacher. I said that Bro. Dolittle's lots and lands and bank stock were his capital, out of

which he expected to get a living. To this he agreed. Now I said Bro. Simpson has no capital but his time and talent and energies, and that he must get a living out of this stock in trade. Now, you want Jake Collins to give a note for an exact amount, to be paid at an exact time for the corner lot, and yet Bro. Dolittle is not willing to put his name to a subscription for a definite amount to be paid at a definite time, for the services of Bro. Simpson, the pastor, though our church by a unanimous vote called the pastor for his whole time. I contended in these matters that a majority in a Baptist Church ought to govern, and that there was no honorable Baptist way out of it, but to toe the mark, sign the subscription and pay up like a little man. For a while our chat was pretty sharp, but by degrees he moderated, and as he could not answer any arguments, we parted—not, however, until he confessed that he respected me for my candor and evident fairness. He seems to know that these brethren who owe him are afraid of him. To tell the plain unvarnished truth, I am not afraid of *him*, but I am a little afraid to tell Sallie Collins all that I said to Bro. Dolittle.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER FOURTEEN.

MUCH ALIKE—MUCH VARIETY—PASTOR'S TROUBLE—CHANGE DEMONSTRATED—THE SALARY—A SACRIFICE APPRECIATED.

Another month is gone and still I have not bought a home nor gone into any regular business. My mind, however, is settled permanently in this town. We have put our letters in the church and gone regularly to work. I think I am going to get all right with these town folks. They are a good deal like country people after all. They swear when they get mad, go in debt; talk about each other and get drunk just like country folks. They go fast and put on clothes a little finer, and put on some extra airs, but then they do not have a bit more sense than the people I was raised with in Georgia and have just left at Black Jack Ridge. The members of the church here are just as good as those we left, though they have a different way of showing it. I am learning a heap as I go along and am bent

still on improving myself. I am bound to do it to keep up with my children. I am not doing as much as I did in the country and have more time to read and study. As I have only been writing once a month I have concluded to improve myself by writing once every week. Sallie Collins says I improve in my letters, and as long as you will print them she advises me to write. She reads every letter and passes sentence on it before I mail it to you. She is just as good a wife in town as she was in the country. I have more time to be with her and help her than I used to, and more time to write. I am determined to study these people by sections and as individuals, so as to avoid mistakes and know just how to use my influence for good. Already I find conflicting elements and a good deal of jealousy. There are people in this church from the north. There is a Scotch element in it. There is a country element that has moved in to educate their children and they insist on having Jake Collins as their spokesman in the event of a fuss or conflict. There are some very rich people in the church and some that are poorer than any we had in the country. Last week I got the church roll and got the brethren, privately, as far as they were willing, to give me a description of the members individually, both as to

disposition and financial condition. I do really believe that I know more about these people, though I have been here only a few months, than does the pastor. There are two hundred and fifty members on the roll. Every shade of circumstance and character is well represented. The man who runs his boat has got to be a captain. I am told they have changed pastors frequently and it is clear to my mind as a frosty morning that they will have to change again. He just does not suit. The record shows that the church did not make a call in the right way, and no wonder the Lord allowed them to make a mistake. They said the town was assuming the proportions of a city and they wrote to the Seminary for an active, educated preacher, and as Brother Simpson was recommended, the church called him. Though he and the church never met, he took to himself a wife and came right on. At first they were delighted. He is good looking, dresses well, is very entertaining in the parlor, makes a nice address to a literary club and is a great favorite with the young men. He is fond of hunting and fishing and spends a large portion of his time that way. He pays very little attention to church finances, lets the singing take care of itself, and is mum on the subject of discipline. Not a single member has ever been

arraigned for trial during his pastorate. His sermons show reading and study in preparation, but by some means he does not get hold of the people. His prayer-meeting exercises are very dull. He lectures, the young people sing a few songs of their own selection, and old Brother Dolittle and one or two others lead in prayer. Of course there are no conversions. Brother Simpson has good congregations—about the best in town. He draws and never fails to entertain. His preaching is like pouring water on a duck's back. The duck likes it, but after all, it is only a puddle duck. No change is wrought. I like the man and so does Sallie Collins, but facts are facts. I am not complaining and do not intend to join with any party to move the preacher, but he will not stay much longer. He cannot. The ax is laid at the root of the tree. It is a pity for any man to get in a position he cannot fill. It is a greater pity for a pastor to try and hold on when a large party in a church is clamoring for a change of preachers. I believe Brother Simpson would go now, if he knew where to go. Of course it is not a sin to be young, but this church demands age and experience in a preacher to enable him to manage these moss-backs, soreheads and cranks. They nearly worry Brother Simpson to death. He has been

here eighteen months and though young, is actually turning gray headed. Last year they promised \$1,000 and only paid \$800. This year they promised \$1,200, in order to keep up with the Methodists just across the street, and Brother Simpson has told me that he did not believe they would pay over \$700 of it. The fact is, a good number made objections privately to the pastor before the subscription was passed around and refused to put down anything. Others, through their influence, have been dissatisfied since, and have informed the collector not to call for monthly dues any more till there is a change of pastors. There is an organized effort to starve the pastor out. They say he hunts too much, courts the rich, wears fine clothes, indulges his wife in her whims, is getting in debt, does not visit enough, will not sit up nights with the sick, is not as sociable as he might be, forgets people's names, and has nearly lost his influence. A good deal of this is true, but how cruel is this treatment. Why not go kindly and tell the brother these things, face to face, and give him a chance to mend his ways or resign and leave in honor. It did always look to me that Christian people ought to be candid and just. There is a right way to do anything that ought to be done. I am satisfied that Brother Simpson ought to go,

and that he will have to go, but I am opposed to the plan of starving him out. They already call me officious, and some of them call me a meddlesome newcomer, because I insist on standing by the action of the church till the act is rescinded, and because I made a little talk in conference insisting on paying that \$200 due on the pastor's salary last year, and paying him up at once the full amount of the monthly installments due on this year. Instead of paying him \$100 a month on this year, as they promised, one month they pay \$50, and another \$75 and one month the collectors were busy and the pastor received only \$25. I told them that I stood up for the church and the preacher against every form of injustice. Sallie Collins said I was right, but urged me to be cautious. The fact was brought out that the church was behind \$200 on last year's salary and \$300 on this, and this year is only half out. Five hundred dollars due a poor preacher and yet some of the very members who owe this money want to run Brother Simpson off because he owes, all told, about town, \$100. When I talk up a good thing right earnestly I always feel like giving, if any money is required. So I said to the brethren that as a member of this church I felt bound to help pay off this debt and that though I was not here last year and enjoyed

with my family none of the benefits of Brother Simpson's ministry, yet I was willing, in addition to my present subscription, to give \$50 more to cancel this claim, and no sooner said than out came the \$50 and over it went to the deacon. I saw a tear in the pastor's eye, and a thrill of joy went through my soul. The church is in trouble over this matter and I can see far enough ahead to discover that here is a good chance for the body to split on the preacher. They must pay up, and, though I have not advised with Sallie Collins, I am quite sure she will consent, when I state the case, to let me give \$100, rather than not pay the pastor every cent due him. In my next I will give you the reasons in full why I am so set in getting this debt out of the way.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER FIFTEEN.

A STRONG DESIRE—BEAUTIFUL SERMONS—BETTER PAY \$500—SALARY PAID—PREAMBLES AND RESOLUTIONS—PRAYER AND VOTING—INCONSISTENCIES—WHO WILL KILL THE CAT?

Several things induced me to move to town. The main reason I gave you before was that we might better educate our children. But while we are making a living and educating our children, we do not want the devil to get them. Some people go through a wonderful amount of labor and anxiety to help Satan increase the population of his territory. Just think of two such boys as ours, comely, intelligent and the pride of Sallie Collins, being led captive by the devil at his will. Think, too, of these two girls, the joy of my heart, both studying music, black-eyed, charming creatures, living forever in hell with adulterers, and murderers, and all the filthy and vile inhabitants of this earth in all generations. The very thought of it staggers me. I would

rather die a thousand deaths than live in view of such a result. When I can see these four children made Christians, well educated and settled as useful citizens in society, and live long enough to render Sallie Collins all the help she needs in her old age, and then see her buried, I now think I will want to die. If I did not think this Church would be revived and the gospel so presented to the people that they, including my four children, would be induced to accept it and be saved, I would never buy a lot in this town, build a house or engage in business. The way things are now running, there is no prospect for winning souls that I can see. I like the preacher as a man and he likes me. He seems to want to do right, and I am determined to help him in every way I can to get loose from these people uninjured. He may make a good temperance lecturer, or agent for some school, or professor in a college, but he cannot do the work required of a pastor in this town. Many of the people brag on his sermons. They say that they are literary, and historical, and poetical, and eloquent, and logical, and short and grand and powerful. But under the sermons nobody ever laughs, nobody ever cries, nobody ever repents, nobody is saved and nobody is baptized. The truth is we need a man here to shake the people

up, wake up these mossbacks, and whisky sots, and rum-sellers. We need a man in Texas to tell these people of Sinai, and the judgment, and hell, and the cross, and the way of life. If you know of such a man that can be had, keep your eye on him and let me know. His services will by and by be in demand.

What I am driving at is to keep the church together, give Bro. Simpson a chance to get away creditably, and find a man whose ministry will lead these people to repentance. I am a strong believer in repentance. It does not save anybody, but it gets a fellow in a fix for salvation quick and certain. Already some of the members have been talking of getting up a petition to the pastor to resign, and then, if he will not, to draw off and start a second Church, and thus get rid of the preacher and old brother Dolittle and a few other men and things they do not like. As a matter of economy, to say nothing of usefulness and happiness, I could see that I had better pay half of that \$500 the Church owes the pastor than see the body divided.

At our last meeting, which occurred yesterday, the collectors reported progress, and we made one more earnest effort and raised enough to settle all back pay due the preacher. I had to give \$25 more, but I did it freely as

water runs. I have my eye fixed on the salvation of my children and the people with whom I expect to spend my life. Brother Simpson was happy, and sister Simpson was happy, and everybody was happy but old Brother Dolittle. The brethren worried the old man to get him to help, and the sisters begged him to help on the salary until at last, after a groan that was sepulchral, he actually gave \$5. He still says he feels the weight of that sacrifice he made in letting the brethren have the Church lot for \$1,000, which only a little while back cost him \$200. He insists that he ought to have had \$2,000 for it, and because of that donation he has refused to give to either Church-house or pastor's salary. When the conference was closing, and while the minutes were being read, I sat and looked into the face of old brother Dolittle, who had just parted with \$5, under a great pressure, and my mind, and heart, and soul, and body passed the following solemn preamble and resolutions:

WHEREAS, He professes to be a Christian; and

WHEREAS, He is an old citizen and has many of these brethren individually, and the Church collectively, largely in debt to him, and thus having great power in the Church, proposes to have everything run in his own way

and very much to the detriment of the cause of religion:

Therefore, *Resolved*:

1. That no man has a right to run a Church.
2. That it is no disrespect to any old citizen for a new comer to assert that doctrine.
3. That while gold will run banks and railroads, it will not do to bow down to it in a Church.
4. That by the grace of God, and by human prudence, and patience, and perseverance, old brother Dolittle's hold on this Church shall be broken, unless he mends his ways.

Just as I was taking a vote on the last resolution, I bowed my head and offered a silent, earnest prayer. I am not the least bit excited and am not at all sore-headed. If I can get Brother Simpson to some other field that suits him and can get Brother Dolittle to take a seat somewhere else except on the back of this church, all well. If I can not at once do these things, then we must be satisfied with the next best thing to it. At any rate I am not going to mouth and pout and take a back seat and say I am neglected and thus make people feel bad and notice me anyhow, whether they want to or not.

I read the New Testament a great deal more than I used to, and as I read the law given by Jesus and the Apostles and the character of the people that formed the early churches and then

compare all that with this church in town it makes me serious and funny by turns. Jesus said: "Freely ye have received, freely give," and then I think of Brother Dolittle. He said again: "It is more blessed to give than to receive"—and again I think of Brother Dolittle, and in my imagination hear the groan he uttered as he parted with that \$5 to help in a settlement with the pastor. Paul said, "Nor thieves nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the Kingdom of God." As I hold my finger on the word "thieves," I thought of a member of this church who has a butcher's shop, and it is commonly understood that a large part of the meat he sells is stolen. Nine-tenths of the brethren believe it, and yet, though he does not come to church on an average more than once a year, no effort is made either to convict or exhonorate him. As I hold my finger on the word "covetous," again I think of Brother Dolittle. I stop at "drunkards" and think of one of our own deacons, and a member who is a leading lawyer and very active in the Sunday-school, and both of them are generally full of drink. Then I think of three of the members of the church who are merchants. One of them is in the wholesale whisky business, another keeps it on tap for all his customers, and another rents

a row of houses for saloons and gambling dens and some other things I cannot write about. He is also known to have an interest in a house where they sell it by the drink. It is a strange state of affairs to me in the face of what the Testament says about things. Of course it would not do for me to tackle such things as these yet. I am a new comer and I notice that all that class of folks are suspicious of me, and so they may be.

I pause awhile and look at the word "revilers"—and think of Jesus, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, at the same time remembering that some of these members will resent an insult and swear and fight just as any ordinary sinner, and no discipline is ever brought to bear. As I hold my finger on the word "extortioners," again I think of Brother Dolittle. He takes advantage of law and circumstances and gets as much for as little as possible and never lets up on any rate of interest he can command. Everybody abuses him and everybody wants something done with him in the Church and out, and yet his position is such that they are afraid to open fire on him. All the rats agree that the cat ought to be killed, but not a single rat will undertake the job. There is a way out of this situation of affairs.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER SIXTEEN.

A GREAT MISFORTUNE—BROTHER SIMPSON'S TROUBLES INCREASE—A FRIEND—NO CONVERSIONS—A DOUBT—THE PROTRACTED PRAYER-MEETING—ELECTION OF BROTHER SLAUGHTER—THE APPOINTMENT MADE.

It is a great misfortune for a man to accept a position he cannot fill. Jim Smith will accept a seat in Congress if you will offer it to him and yet he is not fit for justice of the peace in precinct No. 49. Bill Jones wants to be Governor or United States Senator and would actually accept a nomination for the Presidency of the Government, and yet he does not know where China is nor the meaning of minister plenipotentiary.

Brother Brooks is all right at Black Jack Ridge, as pastor, but he could not meet the demands of this town church. These people go too fast for him. They said at Black Jack Ridge that I was too fast, but I have had to mend my ways to keep up with these folks and I

am beginning to see the need of mending again. Brother Simpson is all broken up. So many objections to him and they are increasing. He regards me as his special friend since I succeeded in making the church pay up. After the salary was paid he came to me for advice and I candidly told him to resign at once. I showed him the objections the people had to him and assured him that he could just now leave with credit, but that if he staid even to the end of the year there was danger of his being compelled to leave under a cloud. Any preacher knows when to begin his sermon, but when to quit preaching and when to resign the care of the church is an art that many preachers have lost, or never had.

Now, Brother Simpson has had charge of this church for eighteen months without a conversion or baptism, and yet if the people would pay his salary and listen at his literature and logic and rhetoric he would be willing to stay indefinitely. When I go fox hunting I am not satisfied with rabbits and coons. If I were a preacher and trying to win souls to Christ, I could not be content with logic and literature and trash. Sent by the Son of God to "feed sheep" I could not be content giving bread to dogs and casting pearls before swine. Strange that these doctors and lawyers and wise town

folks could not show Brother Simpson the need of his resigning at this juncture, in order to hold this church together. But it seemed decreed from before the foundation of the world that Jake Collins should influence this Church to pay an honest debt to an honest but misguided preacher, and then succeed in getting the preacher to resign. It is clear to my mind that I have done two goods things, and Sallie Collins says well done, even if I do break down on some future indiscretion.

No sooner was it known that Brother Simpson had resigned than he learned of his election to a professorship in a college, which he accepted with delight. Of two things I am doubtful: To my mind it is barely possible that Brother Simpson has never been converted; if converted, I doubt his call to the ministry; if converted and called to preach, I am certain the Lord never called him to this church. I think this impression generally prevails. The church dealt honestly with him and paid him, but the parting and resolutions passed were very formal affairs. A motion was made to appoint a committee to correspond for a pastor, but it was promptly voted down. A motion for a day of fasting and a week of prayer prevailed. One after another was appointed to lead the meetings,

and, with no preacher among us, the Savior kept His promise and made one in the midst. Quite a number of the members who promised and voted to attend dropped out, because they were not willing to take part in the public reading and praying and talk. While the congregation grew smaller, the number that were active in the meetings increased. Toward the close of the week, having watched the progress of things, I caught onto an idea, or an idea caught onto me, and in a moment I had a solution of the whole difficulty in the way of the progress of this church. I took two brethren to one side and committed to them my secret. Both were very pious men. One was a merchant and the other a poor mechanic. My thought was to get all the piety in the church to the front and drive away, for the time-being, the unconverted element and all the intensely wordly-minded members. Sinners and cold-hearted Christians do not enjoy warm and devout prayer meetings. What we needed was to get the chaff and wheat separated. A motion was made to continue the prayer meeting another week. One brother suggested that we had better stop and call a preacher. He was of the opinion, from the way he felt, that we were on the eve of a revival, and that we would need some one soon to do some baptiz-

ing. The question was called for and another week of prayer was ordered. In every prayer a petition was sent to the Lord for a pastor. Pledges were made to the Lord in prayer, and between prayers covenants were made with one another to join in sustaining, in both temporal and spiritual things, any pastor the good Lord would send us. At the first prayer meeting only two brethren would talk and three lead in prayer. At the end of the second week fifteen took part. In the meantime two or three had backed out, and among them was old Brother Dolittle. He said he believed in praying, but those public covenants to stand by the pastor and pay him a definite amount of money, and pay it monthly, he did not believe in. He believed that preachers, of all people, ought to walk by faith. To pay a preacher twelve hundred dollars a year—one hundred dollars every month—looked very much like walking by sight. So Brother Dolittle and others went out from us.

Every man in that prayer meeting was a committeeman to get a preacher and for four weeks the meetings went on. At our regular monthly meeting the vote was cast and the lot fell on Brother Slaughter unanimously. The clerk was ordered to inform Brother Slaughter of his election, and one of the brethren suggested

that as Brother Jake Collins was not yet engaged in any regular business, he be requested to carry the letter to the pastor elect and urge his acceptance, as we all believed this was of the Lord. Of course I accepted the trust, and after much prayer and counsel with Sallie Collins I went on my mission.

A hundred miles were between us and this good man whom we had elected pastor. Only a few hours' ride on the train and I was at his house. But few of us had ever seen him, and then it was at our general meetings. He is a modest man and weighs one hundred and seventy-five pounds. He is 43 years of age and well educated. He is persuasive in his manner but a man of great decision. His wife is a model housekeeper, and is the mother of six sprightly children. They were greatly surprised at my message. I frankly told them what I knew and showed that it was a hard field. To my great joy Bro. Slaughter said he cared not a cent how hard it was if the Lord went with him. He seemed deeply moved as I continued to talk to him, and after much conversation and prayer, he insisted that if we would carry on the prayer-meeting another week, I might make an appointment for him the following Sunday and he would visit us and preach. - I am full of hope. JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER SEVENTEEN.

MUSIC—MANY KINDS—TROUBLE—THE DEVIL'S
PLAN—WILL IT PAY?—PUZZLED—SOME-
THING MUST BE DONE—QUESTIONS OF
INTEREST.

The more I read and see and think, the more
am I convinced that music is a good thing.
From the Bible account I suppose that every-
body in Heaven likes music. All the worship
and service of the angels and the redeemed
seem to be full of music. Everything on earth,
men and animals, like music, and there are a
great many varieties of music. There are a
great many differences of opinion as to what
constitutes good music. One boy with a case
knife and a tin pan is delighted with the sounds
he makes, and another, with a ten-cent tin
bugle from a Christmas tree, can perform with
ecstasy the livelong day. Some like wind, and
others stringed instruments. Then there are
others who prefer the human voice so much
above all other sounds that they are even

opposed to hearing an instrument accompany the voice in song. When it comes to sacred music some people propose to give violin, flute, guitar, cornet, piano and organ, all to Satan for his own private use and benefit. And if there is any extra power or fascination to be gained by long-continued and laborious cultivation of the human voice, they are willing that his Satanic majesty should have that also.

Never did I dream that town folks had trouble over their music, I thought that the reason country people got tangled so was that they did not understand music well enough to know how to run it successfully. But in town, where six music teachers belong to the church, and where about one-half the young people can bang the piano or blow the organ, it is worse. *One* wanted to run the music at Black Jack Ridge. But here in town at least *sixteen* feel competent to conduct the singing better than any of the other fifteen who are trying to get charge of it.

If I were the devil and had a spite at a town pastor, I would be willing to let up for a while on swearing and stealing and lying and the saloon business, and take charge of his choir. The first motion I would have made should be that the choir should be an independent institution. The pastor might select a part of the

hymns, but must have nothing to say about tunes and solos and quartettes and duets. This blessed eight or ten or sixteen, as the case might be, should have a platform in the church building above everything and everybody, and on that rostrum hold meetings once or twice a week. Nobody should have a place in that choir on Sunday who did not regularly attend the choir meetings. I would put as organist in charge a fidgety, unconverted, seventeen-year-old woman, and see to it that some town boy, with a cane and his hair parted in the middle, should accompany her to church. As leader of the choir I would appoint a prayerless, back-slidden, presumptuous, worldly-minded brother, who would not hesitate, in order to carry his point, to use the "rule-or-ruin" policy. I would, by every possible means, discourage congregational singing. I would let the people know that the folks on the platform were drilled, not to *lead*, but to *do* the singing. If the choir sitting on the platform could not induce the people to hold their tongues, I would make the singers stand up on the platform, and I would see to it that the songs were all new, and allow none of the congregation to have song books.

Brother Simpson has had a world of trouble with this town choir. These singers seem to

have strange notions. A great deal of their attention is given to worldly music. They indulge in literature largely. Sometimes they have entertainments in the name of the church, and neither pastor nor church is consulted as to proprieties or improprieties. They do not attend Sunday-school nor prayer meeting. About half of them are not church members, and the others seem to have forgotten their conversion and baptism. The old members tell me that you cannot rely on them at all, during a protracted meeting. They seem to feel that their mission is to attend dress parades Sunday morning, and at night they are always out in force. While the preacher labors and the congregation listens, they pass notes, and whisper and giggle, and in various ways let the pastor and church know that they are not a part of the main performance. They made Brother Simpson believe that the larger part of his congregation was drawn to the church to hear them sing. Since his resignation, they make free to say that if the church elects a pastor who makes the least objection to the old schedule of music, they are going to resign in a body, and that the Methodist and Presbyterian pastors have both petitioned for their services. As they are so troublesome and independent, and continually making threats to resign, I asked the

church clerk to show me the minutes of the action of the church appointing either a choir, or a leader or an organist. To my great surprise the church has never taken any action in the matter whatever. The whole company is self-appointed, and has regular by-laws of its own. The choir gave an entertainment, made money, bought an organ, got tired of that one, gave another concert, traded the old one off and bought a new one, without any conference with church, Sunday-school, pastor or deacon.

I am puzzled. I know what to do with some things. A hoe is good in a garden; a pig can be put in a lard can if he is good fat, and turpentine is good for a fresh cut. But what use to make of this town church choir is a problem I cannot solve. They are not fit to sing in a prayer-meeting. The fact is, they are not trained for prayer-meeting singing. The leader is not a prayer-meeting man. They would make a balky team in a revival and would be greatly confused if one of their number was to become interested on the subject of religion. Something has got to be done, and done soon. During the month that we have been going on with our prayer-meeting, without a preacher, the choir has put in no appearance Sunday

nor any other time. I understand that they are out visiting the other churches, waiting for us to get a preacher. They meet regularly as a choir at another place, so as not to interfere with our prayer-meetings, and, I hear, have some very fine new music to present to the public on the arrival of our new preacher, the pastor-elect. If Brother Slaughter puts up with the ways of this choir I shall be wonderfully deceived. I do want to do right. This is all new to me. Many of our members are waking up to an understanding of the sad reality that is upon us in relation to this question of church music.

Please write me at once, and answer the following questions, as you are a town man, and know town folks and town ways:

1. Ought not the church, either by a vote or through a committee, or its deacons or pastor, to appoint an organist and a leader of singing?

2. Ought an unconverted person or a cold and disaffected church member to lead church music?

3. Ought the singing to be done by a few, or ought all the people to be encouraged to praise God in song?

Please be prompt in writing me. Much depends on what you say. I am greatly troubled and exceedingly anxious to know what our

coming pastor is going to do with this town choir. If he can manage them I think he can do the rest.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER EIGHTEEN.

ARRIVAL OF BRO. SLAUGHTER—A GOOD BEGINNING—HOW TO GET ACQUAINTED—FEARS THE CHOIR—THE POWERS OF THE GOSPEL.

Bro. Slaughter has come ; he came right to our house ; he said he had a dozen or more invitations from the members to stop at their houses, but at the depot he said he inquired for the house of Jake Collins, and had no difficulty. Sallie Collins demanded of me, in renting a house as well as in building, to provide a room for the preacher. Of course we were glad to have him, but I frankly told him that I believed it would have been better for him to have had an introduction to the town through some of the older and wealthier members. He only replied that the church had risked Jake Collins to carry the message of his election as pastor, and that he would risk the balance. He asked a great many questions in addition to those he asked when I went after him. He did express his opinions very freely, but kept me and Sal-

lie Collins on the witness stand for about ten hours, and yet he made the examination so pleasant to us that we scarcely took the hint. He came by the Friday's train, and I proposed Saturday morning to take him around town and introduce him to the members. To this he objected, and said that Monday would be time enough. He had notified the church and the daily paper that he would preach at the Baptist church on Sunday at 11, and at night.

At the breakfast table Saturday morning he joined freely in conversation with Sallie Collins and the children. He soon knew the children's names, and found out that none of them were Christians. He did not press on them any religious conversation, but expressed his joy that they were having literary and religious training at home and in Sunday-school. As they retired from the table he said to the children that he hoped they would get well acquainted and be life-long friends.

After the children and I were gone out, he still lingered a few minutes and engaged in further conversation with Sallie Collins. In that he reminded me of good Bro. Brooks. In my heart, I believe that Bro. Slaughter has got the key to the situation. A preacher that can come to my house and take a good square look into the eyes of Sallie Collins and not feel

inclined to talk with her about the joys of religion and the way to glory, is a poor excuse for a shepherd. He told Sallie Collins that he had been laboring in protracted meetings for some months past, and that he preferred to spend the day in resting and meditation. He further said that he preferred, as far as possible, to get acquainted with the people at church, and that in the event he decided to settle among us, he must be allowed to spend most of his time in reading and preparation for the pulpit. He believes that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and that God has ordained the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

Sallie Collins says it seems all right to hear Bro. Slaughter talk that way, but she fears a good many of the members are going to be disappointed if he does not go to the houses of all the members every month and learn the names of all the young people in the congregation the first moon. When Sallie Collins told him this, he made no reply, but heaved a sigh, as though he had heard such demands elsewhere.

Sunday came, and the people crowded our big meeting-house. Old Bro. Dolittle and the brethren who deserted us in the prayer-meeting were all present and on the front seats to hear

and welcome the new preacher. The choir was out in full force and in a flutter. They had been on duty for a week every night late, getting ready for that occasion. The leader had imported two singers from an adjoining town, and had decoyed two or three singers from the other congregations in town. They were all on that high platform with silks and satins rustling and ribbons trembling in the gentle breeze. Although they knew that Bro. Slaughter was in town, no one came to know anything about the songs he wished to use at either of the services. They had been accustomed to manage that, and never for a moment thought that Bro. Slaughter ought to have anything to do with it. Not a single person who had been attending our prayer-meetings was on that platform with the singers, and several of them made no pretensions towards being religious. The others seemed to have it in a very mild form.

Promptly at five minutes before eleven Bro. Slaughter walked into the pulpit. In less than a minute he selected his scriptures to read. They were the 53d chapter of Isaiah and some verses from the 3d chapter of John.

He took up the church hymn book that lay upon the pulpit. He opened at, "There is a Fountain Filled with Blood," and turned down

a leaf. He turned to the hymn, "In Evil Long I Took Delight," and turned down another leaf. Just as the hands of the clock pointed to eleven, and as Bro. Slaughter was in the act of asking the choir to sing, "Rock of Ages Cleft for me," they broke forth on a long anthem. Sometimes one would sing, and then two would sing, and then four would sing, and then all would sing, except the congregation. The preacher sat and listened very quietly, and to me seemed to be studying the choir and congregation. At the conclusion of that performance he beckoned to the leader of the choir and asked him if they would sing, after reading the Scriptures, "There is a fountain filled with blood," and after prayer, "In evil long I took delight." He very nervously declined, and said he never had drilled the choir on those songs, and he feared they might fail. Being red in the face, he said the next was a duet, before reading the Scriptures, and after reading was a quartette, and that after prayer and before preaching was a solo, and after the sermon a grand chorus.

Bro. Slaughter laid down the hymn book and waited without confusion for the duet, which was rendered with great satisfaction to all except the praying part of the audience. The 53d chapter of Isaiah was read very earnestly

and with good effect. The quartette and solo which preceded the sermon had about as much connection with the Scriptures read, the prayer offered and discourse delivered as exists between the mountains of the moon and the islands of the sea. I shall never be afraid of catching the itch, if I can keep as far away from the fellow that has it as the words of that choir were separated from the words of Bro. Slaughter during that first service.

The text was: "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter." His subject was *sacrifice*. I never before saw such a picture of the bleeding, dying Lamb of God, for sinners slain. With Christ as an example he showed that Christian life was like Christ's life, a sacrifice for others. He measured everything in church work by that rule. Self must be slaughtered. Pride must be crucified. Those who gave must feel it in their business. (We could not help looking at Brother Dolittle). Those who pray must be in sympathy with Jacob at Peniel and Jesus in Gethsemane. (Again I thought of Brother Dolittle and his prayers in some of Brothers Simpson's meetings). Those who sing must be in sympathy with Christ in his labors, groans, bloody sweat death and resurrection to glory. (Then we all looked at that Godless, Christless choir.)

The sermon lasted nearly an hour. Sinners trembled and Christians wept and prayed. Some of the choir failed to sing at the close. They looked pale and careworn and troubled. At night about half the singers failed to put in their appearance. Brother Dolittle sat farther back in the congregation. The brethren who sell whisky and those who drink it, with all those opposed to prohibition were at the church at night, but were in the squirrel-eaten rows. Sallie Collins and I are happy.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER NINETEEN.

FAITHFUL PREACHING—CHOIR DEMORALIZED—
FRONTIER HUNTING—ANOTHER DEACON
NEEDED—WEIGHED AND FOUND WANTING
—WHAT WILL WE DO ?

When I wrote you last, Sallie Collins and I were perfectly happy. We love the Gospel; we love all the people that it has made free; we love a preacher that feels free to preach it in love. Heaven bless the man who, in the fear of God, will hew to the line and let the chips fall where they will. We believe this town church has called a man, in the person of Brother Slaughter, who not only has the right name, but who will yet lead many a soul to the slaughter of pride and passion, and avarice and self-will. His preaching and conversation show that he believes in putting piety at a premium, and the men and women who have it, in the front rank. How old Brother Dolittle is going to succeed in holding the reins of government over this church, with Brother Slaughter

pouring hot shot into his stingy and contrary soul, as he did twice last Sunday, is beyond my credulity. His ways, or that sort of preaching, one or the other, must step down and out. How that Godless, Christless choir are going to keep their places on that platform, in the presence of this people, passing notes and whispering and courting, and maintaining intact their side-show, while Brother Slaughter is at the helm, I can't see. He can put himself in more positions in one sermon, to shoot at sin, big sins and little sins, than any man I have listened to. He reminds me of a frontier still-hunter, with rifle in hand, taking good aim, and bringing down his game at long range. Then all at once he throws aside his rifle and grasps his shot-gun, full of blue whistlers, and fires into the bunch at short range, breaking legs, and backs and necks, just as he happens to strike. Now it is a columbiad; then a broadside. He shoots slugs, and grape, and canister. He keeps a fellow right busy watching out for the safety of his carcass. I do not have so much time, and a great deal less disposition to look after the sins of other people, as I did under the preaching of Brother Simpson, our former pastor. Still, I will be pardoned by asking you, in confidence, if you think men who sell whisky and drink it, and who advocate

the doctrine that it is right to give the license of the government "To pave the dark pathway to hell" for the son of another man, can face the plain, pure Gospel. As sure as we live, our pastor-elect, in those sermons last Sunday, sounded a key-note that will make a square issue all along the line that divides the territories of truth and error. I do not believe Brother Slaughter is afraid, and I am sure that Gideon has a little band, who, though they lap water like dogs, are not going to give the land to the Midianites. "Glory to God in the highest!" We want "Peace on earth and good will to men," but I am sure this peace must be conquered. I am further satisfied that Gideon's band is not made up of Dolittle's, Demijohnocrats, Skinflints, and those who are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

Happy as I was over this issue, and that the battle was actually joined all along the line, a painful rumor has reached my ears, and I am sorely distressed. The brethren are considering the necessity of electing another deacon, and quite a number have announced their intention to vote for Jake Collins. As soon as I heard this I went right home and told Sallie Collins. She suggested at once that we had better get the Bible and see if I could fill the bill of a deacon. She held the Bible and I

got the concordance and hunted up the word deacon. The first place the word occurs is in Phil. 1:1: "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Phillippi, with the bishops and deacons." Sallie Collins said that verse settled three things: 1. All the members in a church ought to be saints—that is, converted people. 2. Preachers are bishops. 3. There are but two sets of officers in a church, bishops and deacons.

The next place I called for was 1st Tim. 3:8. It reads: "Likewise must the deacons be grave." She frankly said, "Jake, you are weighed in the balances and found wanting." Sallie Collins said the word *grave* means serious and dignified. She and the children know that I am not up to that standard. Sometimes I feel serious and dignified enough, but then, that sort of clothes do not fit me long at a time. She read on down to the twelfth verse, and, with eyes full of love and tears, told me that I did not take control of the house and children as I ought. She never thinks of scolding me, but I felt very little like managing the affairs of a church, as I was reminded that the care of ruling and managing the household had always been laid on the shoulders and heart of Sallie Collins. When she read the

character required of deacons' wives, in the eleventh verse, I could see that Paul meant Sallie Collins when he said, "Grave, sober, faithful in all things." But when I read the tenth verse, "Let these first be proved," and then after "using the office of a deacon well," being "found blameless," I plainly saw that I was a failure to begin with, and that, if in the providence of God Sallie Collins should be taken from me, Jake Collins, with this house and these children to manage as a deacon, would be a first-class calamity. Now, the preacher tells me that those seven men named and chosen in the 6th chapter of Acts were deacons, and you know that they were to be men of "Honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." We looked it all over, and decided that the following defects would not admit of my being a deacon.

1. I was indiscreet. 2. I could not controll people; I had to be controlled. 3. I was a new comer, and had not been sufficiently proved. So far as I am concerned, the question is settled. Whenever Sallie Collins and I get our heads together, our watch is always right. It is the other fellow's time-piece that will allow the train to leave you.

Since I have studied this question it is funny to go round town and talk to the deacons.

We have got enough of them in this church to fill all the important offices in a railroad corporation. And from my observation among them they would succeed better at that than in managing the financial department of a church. One of our deacons will go right out on the street and tell as many smutty anecdotes as any man in town. How will that do for gravity and dignity? Another one will go in a saloon, and in about an hour come out with eyes red and a sort of happy-go-easy expression like a fool. How will that do for "sober?" Another one has a good deal of property, and yet will not pay his debts. How will that do for "honest report?" The object of appointing the seven men in Acts 6th was to provide for neglected widows. One of these town widows, a member of our church, was reported as needy, and our deacon suggested that her husband was a Mason and an Odd Fellow, and that it was the sworn duty of the men in those orders to provide for her. He said he was taxed there, and preferred to pay through that channel. How will that do for a man that is an officer in Christ's Church, who agreed at conversion, baptism and ordination to put Christ and His Church above all men and organizations? Another deacon holds that he is no beggar, and therefore has neither time

nor inclination to solicit the members for money, either to feed the poor, support the pastor or missions. He says, if they will bring it to him and tell him what to do with it, he will carry out their individual wishes.

Now, Brother Hayden, in all candor write me at once what we are to do. Of course, we can never keep house for God without a pastor, with all his reasonable physical and mental wants supplied. He must have a regular supply of food, raiment and books. I am not fit for a deacon. What shall we do with the deacons we have? What shall we do for more?

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER TWENTY.

A HAPPY MONDAY—A SAD SATURDAY—TEARS
AND PRAYERS — A SON CONVERTED—A
SHOUT—COME TO THE BAPTISM.

Bless the Lord, oh my soul! This is Monday morning, and I hasten to write you about our meeting yesterday. Christian life has its sorrows, but its joys so far outstrip its sadness that I am ashamed that ever I complained a word about hardships of any sort. For a man of my temperament, it is hard at times to bear the criticisms that are heaped upon me. The Lord knows I am trying to do right. The Lord also knows that the devil and these unconverted Baptists and stingy, do-nothing-for-Christ, hangers-on-at-meeting people are doing all they can to switch me off the track. My sinful self is also against my progress in religion, and at times the burdens of living a respectable Christian life almost crush me. What would I do if it were not for Sallie Collins, in times like this? With her help I turn my eyes from

self, the devil and the world, and in one earnest prayer, trusting alone in the merits of Jesus, I throw trouble to the winds, and "Read my title clear to mansions in the skies." It seems now that I can "Bid farewell to every fear and wipe my weeping eyes."

Saturday all day I observed that Sallie Collins was sad. She talked but little, and seemed to prefer solitude. The spirit that was upon her seemed to take a powerful hold on me. In our earlier married life I used to worry her, every time I saw a cloud on her face, till she told me what was the matter. But I afterwards found that was not always the best. Sometimes the good woman did not want to trouble me with all her little cares, and at other times she was waiting to get control of herself before telling me of her griefs. Many a time Saturday did my watchful eye see Sallie Collins brush a tear away. She often, in the midst of her domestic affairs, looked out of the window, and her lips would move without uttering a sound that I could hear. Her actions somehow made me think of Hannan, as observed by Eli, the priest of God, about a year before Samuel was born. I turned to the 1st chapter of 1st Samuel, and read the account. My impression was that Sallie Collins was praying for her boys.

Our boys, you know, are aged respectively, ten and twelve years. During the day Saturday they both seemed thoughtful, and though they did their work cheerfully, seemed far more than ordinarily serious. Brother Slaughter took dinner with us, and, before going away, read a part of a Psalm and a few verses of the sayings of Jesus, and explained the plan of salvation. In an earnest prayer he prayed for salvation for our family and the Lord's blessing upon our service the following day. My impression is that Sallie Collins slept but little Saturday night. She has always said that it is a fearful thing for children, and especially boys, to go into their teens without religion.

Yesterday, after the great town clock struck twelve, our dear pastor closed his sermon, asking any in the congregation who were seeking Christ and wanted the people of God to pray for them, to kneel. All of our children, as is their custom, were sitting near their mother. Our two boys promptly kneeled. Never on this earth was such a load laid on the hearts of Jake and Sallie Collins. Our very hearts melted within us and our spirits, as the spirit of one, wrestled with the Lord as Jacob at Peniel. I heard Sallie Collins say as she was kneeling by her boys: "Oh, Lord, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard us. Take

these burdens from my precious boys and make them live forever." The pastor prayed for our boys, and some others who kneeled in the congregation, and after a few words in addition to the sermon about the plan of salvation through Christ, he stated the evidences of conversion, and asked those who trusted all to Christ and felt that they were saved, to confess it publicly. He asked the people to sing "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," and just as the people sang, "Let me to Thy bosom fly," our twelve-year-old boy advanced to the preacher. Oh, the joy of that moment! Our oldest boy was saved! We thought of little Sam, whom we had buried at Black Jack Ridge, "Safe in the arms of Jesus." Our youngest boy was in Heaven and here stood our oldest, the first one to profess conversion in this church in town since we moved here. Of course Sallie Collins clapped her hands and said, "Bless the Lord," so that all the people heard her. And none of the people blamed her. It was, however, only a moment till we were in tears at the feet of our other boy, who by this time seemed overcome with his sin and sorrow.

Imagine, if you can, Brother Slaughter preaching Sunday night with Sallie Collins in front of him, sitting between her boys. One of them wore a bright and happy face. The

other wore a countenance of sorrow that really seemed strange upon the face of a boy ten years old. The pastor had for his text, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." He made the way simple. While we prayed, our other boy grasped the thought, believed on Christ and was saved. Two others professed conversion, and you can only imagine the joy at our house last night. This blessed Monday morning I am happy in all my bones. Everything about me seems to praise God. The sun is brighter, the air is purer and more bracing, the breakfast was better, the sky is bluer, the trees are greener, the bird song is sweeter, Sallie Collins and the children are dearer, home is better and Heaven is nearer. If I am always as happy in Heaven as I am this Monday morning I can never complain.

Now, Brother Hayden, you must come over next Sunday and see Brother Slaughter baptize these boys. The preacher's room is ready for you, and Sallie Collins says be sure to come.

What a fool a man is that has no more sense than I have. I was actually afraid to move to town. But for Sallie Collins I would have been in the country yet. The only thing I was afraid of was that we could not make a

living. We have been in town about a year. Our children have all done well in school. The boys are saved. We are happy and hopeful. My ten thousand dollars I brought here have supported us, and our opinion is that we are worth fifteen thousand dollars. Sallie Collins is economical and she and the children do all the work at home. I succeeded in loaning five thousand dollars at ten per cent. The interest supported us. The other five thousand I put in town lots near where I believed the new railroad would establish a depot, and the property has doubled in value.

Sallie Collins has said all the time that if we would be prudent, do our duty in the church and for the Savior, and raise the children right, that the Lord would prosper us. We agreed to give the Lord a tenth, and so you see we have five hundred dollars to give away. I am so glad that I influenced the church to pay up the salary of Brother Simpson. It is true, it cost me seventy-five dollars extra of my subscription, but what is that compared with the blessings the Lord is giving me.

Be sure to be here next Sunday to see these boys baptized.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER TWENTY-ONE.

A STRANGE MIXTURE—NECESSITY OF THE NEW
BIRTH—WILL THE CHURCH GO TO PIECES?
TOWN IN A STIR.

It is a fact that no one will contradict, that preachers and their people, as a rule, show less judgment and consistency in religious matters than about anything else. A farmer will not put his sheep and hogs in the same pen; the average old sow would eat up the lambs before midnight. The old mule and cow, with young calf, are not put in the same stall at the barn. A ten-year-old boy knows that that will not do, and can give you a good reason. Dogwood berries are not planted where you expect to raise cotton. Birds of a feather *will* and *ought* to flock together. I never saw a pig claim a sheep for its mother. Congeniality, consanguinity and affinity influence birds and fishes and beasts and worldly-minded people in choosing their associates. Why the same law should not hold good in forming societies or churches

under the influences of religion, I never could see. The Bible is a reasonable book, and makes reasonable requirements of people. It says, "You cannot serve God and mammon." That means that you cannot be pig and puppy at the same time. Religion is light, sin is darkness. A squirrel loves daylight and lives in the trees.

I have thought a great deal about such things, when at church and when reading the Bible. The fact is, the men who wrote the Bible thought a great deal about such things in connection with religion and the church. Bad men are called dogs, and swine, and snakes, and wolves, and goats. Good men are called sheep and doves. Who would ever dream of putting all these creatures in the same cage? Yet some preachers and churches will let in a hog and a sheep and a dog and a wolf into the same fold, and do it knowingly. In another case, a snake and a dove are put into the same little green cage. Nothing can be more out of place than an unconverted man in a church. A baby boy a year old, who can scarcely stand alone, is not a fit subject for pants such as men wear. A calf a day old cannot give milk, walk straight nor pull a plow; and yet that year old boy is

more like a cow or an ox, than is an unsaved sinner like a proper subject of the Kingdom of God.

If a church is a Savior sinners ought to be taken in, regardless of any change in their nature; but as a church is not a Savior, and as Christ says, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God," clear evidences of conversion ought to be required of all persons seeking membership. It is not enough for a man to say he *wants* to be a Christian, he must be "A new creature in Christ," or he makes a false statement in his baptism. The language of baptism is "Dead to sin," "Planted in the likeness of his death," risen to "Walk in newness of life."

The truth is, an unchanged man has no place nor business in a church. He does not know how to pray for sinners nor for himself. He is not in sympathy with the message of the preacher. He cannot "Sing with the spirit and with the understanding also." He cannot give with the proper motives. His place is in the world. In the church he is a fish out of water. He can serve mammon, but he cannot serve God.

Brother Slaughter is a strong believer in the resurrection and regeneration. He preaches a change of heart by the power of the Holy

Spirit through the blood of Jesus. He gives converts a chance to tell what they know about religion, and encourages them to make clear statements of their feelings and views of church work while they are applying for membership. He has preached so much on this line already, and talked so plainly to the church when receiving members, that quite a number of them have decided that they never were converted.

Since this question has been stirred, it looks to some like the church will go to pieces. Some say they do not understand this change of heart, and are seriously talking of joining the Campbellites. Others say they had rather quit the church than give up dancing. Another element is clamoring against close communion. Still another party insists that they have a right to go to the saloons and spend what time in them they see proper, declaring that the church has no right to curtail their privileges.

Brother Slaughter and Sallie Collins say it will all work out right. He preached last Sunday, showing that the church was composed of persons who became members of their own accord. He said Baptists are opposed to putting infants in the church. He did not admit for a moment that anybody ought to join the church under any kind of constraint. Having shown that, he said the church was not a prison.

If any of those in wanted to get out he was in favor of letting them out, and would help them to get out. He said the church had asked them to join, on condition they were changed in heart. Upon a statement of evidences to that effect, and on condition they would submit to baptism, the church voted them in, The door through which they entered was fellowship. The language they spoke at the door was the speech of repentance and faith, and the garments they wore were wet with the waters of baptism. Brother Slaughter showed that we had fellowshiped them in, and that they could easily get out at the same door they entered.

Quite a number have signified their intention to go. One man says he was persuaded by his wife and mother till he yielded, but has never been satisfied, Though a good, moral man, he insists that the pastor is right, and has sent in his application to be dismissed. The dancing, and swearing, and whisky elements have decided to go out unless the preacher lets up. We have several members who rarely ever attend communion service, but have a great deal to say against close communion. They say they have friends and kinfolds in the other churches, and they want to be where they can commune with them. Till lately, I never knew there were so many people in our

churches who love themselves and their kin-folks better than they do Jesus Christ and the laws of His Kingdom. The whole town is in a stir. His late sermon was from the text, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." He preached that Baptist Churches could never be built up and maintained except by a converted membership, sound in doctrine. He urged the church to rally on that line, and that he would consent to lead us on no other basis.

Some of our members are in counsel with the Episcopal preacher. Some are about to join the Campbellites, and the crowd that makes so much fuss about communion are attending the services of the Methodists and Presbyterians. The town is full of rumors about what Brother Slaughter said and the action of our church. They say we are bigoted and ignorant and narrow-minded and uncharitable. They pour hot shot into me on every corner. I am in trouble. I cannot answer all their arguments, nor meet all their objections. Brother Slaughter and Sallie Collins say it is all right, and that a calm and reaction will follow the storm. We shall see. JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER TWENTY-TWO.

TEN GONE OUT—A LONG LETTER—DOOR WIDE
OPEN—NOT AFRAID.

Yesterday we had a business meeting of the church. Brother Slaughter read ten letters from each of ten of our disaffected members, asking that their names be dropped from our church list, and that they be relieved from their covenant obligations. One stated that he believed baptism was as necessary in order to obtain salvation as either repentance or faith, that he preferred that a church be called Christian rather than Baptist, and that he objected to praying for sinners and the operation of the Holy Spirit as preached by Brother Slaughter. Since I joined this town church I have never seen that man at prayer meeting. They say he is often present at preaching, sits away back, and has always a fault to find with the preacher's doctrine and the way the church has of receiving members, and doing a good many other things. His letter covered four

pages of foolscap paper and I urged that it all be read. Now, that we have got started, I am in favor of going to the bottom of this whole affair. Something dreadful has been the matter with this church, and I believe we are about to find the little foxes that are eating our vines. There has been something in our soup that has been making us sick for a long time, and now I am in for an examination. When such a woman as Sallie Collins prays for sinners as she does, and then gets answers to her prayers as in the cases of our boys, and then a man in the church objects to experiences such as our two boys and some others have, recently been relating to our church, there is bound to be something wrong. Either he or Sallie Collins, one or the other, ought to step down and out of a Baptist Church. And yet some preachers will tell you there is not much difference between Campbellites and Baptists except in *name!* You may as well tell me that calling a goat a sheep will change hair into wool, or change his hoofs so that he cannot climb a fence. A hog is a hog in a mud hole or out, call it what you may. You may put a dog in a band-box for a month and go through the vocabulary of pet names, and when turned out he will still be a dog and will go to his vomit again.

When that long letter of objections was read and everybody was quiet for a moment, I moved that the door of the church be opened as wide as possible, and let the brother have an easy time getting out. Why any Baptist should want a man in the church with such sentiments as were presented in that letter, I cannot imagine.

Another one stated that he objected to our form of church government. He said that it was impossible ever to have peace, with all the boys and girls, as well as men and women, voting on every question that comes before the church. He believed that a few would be more apt to reach correct conclusions and be better prepared to receive and exclude members than the whole multitude of disciples. Brother Slaughter read in reply the action of the church at Jerusalem, in the election of one to take the place of Judas. He showed that in the election of deacons in the sixth chapter of Acts, the multitude of disciples chose the officers, and that the man guilty of incest at Corinth was excluded and afterwards restored by a vote of the *majority*. As in the election of officers, excluding and restoring members, a *majority* decided all questions, so it must be proper in receiving persons for baptism, or

in doing any church business, that the whole body should be allowed to vote.

Another objected to the action of the church in disciplining its members for dancing. He said it was an innocent amusement, and declared his intention to dance in all public places on all proper occasions, and denied the right of any church to restrict him.

Two others objected to close communion, and insisted that as we would commune together in heaven, we ought to get ready for it by communing together on earth. Their arguments showed that in the Lord's Supper they thought of father and mother and husband and wife, and earthly friends, more than they thought of Jesus and His word when He said to each disciple in eating the bread and drinking the wine, "Do this in remembrance of me."

Another stated that his wife belonged to another church, and that he thought families ought to go together.

So, under the advice of our pastor, we withdrew fellowship from them all. One went to the Campbellites, two joined the Episcopalians, three joined the Presbyterians and four went to the Methodists.

The more I think of it the better I am pleased with my vote in letting them go. How can two walk together except they be agreed?

Instead of strength in union we have been exhibiting weakness in division. Where is the consistency in having the pastor and a few earnest souls building while others in the same organization are pulling down and destroying? People who are not converted, and people who do not believe the doctrines that distinguish the Baptists, ought to get out, and every facility ought to be given to aid them either to accept our doctrines and work with us, or to seek more congenial company.

To have ten go out at one meeting looked like a breaking-up business, but the church is not a prison. They were not forced in and they ought not be forced to stay.

It is a matter of surprise to me that so many good people have so little use for the Bible on some questions. The Bible says "repent and believe the gospel." A preacher will get up and say that you must first believe the gospel and then repent, and straightway some good people will switch off after him. They seem to think that his way of putting it is more reasonable than the way the Bible puts it. Why they say, how can a man repent before he believes the gospel? The Bible says, "He that believeth and is baptized," and yet some people seem to regard this as a great mistake, and say that the people ought to be baptized in

infancy and childhood and believe in Christ afterwards. Plain as the Bible is on baptism and communion, and church order and church discipline, a great many persons argue from custom and the discipline and confession and prayer-book, and that it does not make much difference anyway, what you believe, so your heart is all right and you are sincere.

Brother Slaughter says that such people may be good neighbors and good citizens, but are not fit for Baptists. He farther says the day is at hand when we are compelled to draw a clear line between the church and the world. He insists that in making a fight for a regenerated membership, the baptism of believers only, a congregational form of church government, and that those only are entitled to place at the Lord's table who have been baptized and are members of a church in good standing, that those in the church who are not in sympathy with these principles may be expected to desert us.

Having accepted the resignations of these ten the probabilities are we will have to send in the resignations of ten or fifteen more. They dance and drink whisky and will not attend church; they give nothing, and are not only worthless, but are a standing reproach to the cause of religion. With all this, they

insist on holding their membership and are likely to give us trouble. It does look at times like this church will go to pieces. You know that is what I used to think over at Black Jack Ridge, but I have found out that sticking to the Bible is not a good way to break up a Baptist church. So you see I am not scared. If we are right, then we are right; if right, God is for us; if God be for us, Israel will be brought out of Egypt; if Israel be brought out of Egypt, then we will get to Canaan. I am getting so I do not think of anything as a support for a church but Christ and His gospel. I am thoroughly convinced that if we trust in Him and do what He says about everything all will go well. With the help of the Lord we are going to keep our powder dry and take good aim.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER TWENTY-THREE.

A BAD SPIRIT—SOUL LIBERTY—JOHN SHARPE
—THE GREAT CROWD—A SHARP CRITICISM
—KINDNESS WINS.

Since our members have been drawing out and going to other denominations, quite a strange spirit has seized upon some others of these town Baptists. A part of them are irritable, and given to saying hard things, both against the outgoing members and the churches they are joining. When a little boy I used to puzzle my brain asking myself and my mother and the teacher why the Lord made snakes and yellow jackets and hornets and wasps and stinging scorpions and biting dogs and snapping-turtles. When put to work in the orchard and garden I could see the good of plums and peaches and apples and pears and berries and melons and vegetables, but I could not give a satisfactory reason for briars and weeds and grass that were in the way of the vegetables and trees, and required so much sweat and

blood and labor to exterminate. But I can now see a great deal more use for these things than a bad spirit in a church. A sneer here and a snarl there, the suggestion of an improper motive, in the one case, and an insinuation against the moral character in another, shows a spirit of intolerance that seems to me opposed to soul liberty.

God gives no man a right to do wrong, to worship idols, or in anyway disobey or disregard his church ordinances, but as He has not given me nor this town church charge of other people's consciences; it seems that we ought to be willing for people to go to any denomination they choose, or stay out among the unconverted if they want to. The Savior rebuked Peter for meddling with his instructions to John. When John wanted to make the people quit working miracles because they would not follow him he ordered that they be let alone. When this same John wanted to call fire from Heaven and burn up the people who would not receive and entertain the Master and His disciples, information was imparted by the great Teacher to the effect that the Son of Man came, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

Last Sunday Brother Slaughter was called away to aid in the ordination of a minister,

and invited Brother John Sharpe to preach to us during his absence. The visiting brother had evidently heard of the dissatisfaction and withdrawal of some of our members, and in order to stop any others from going out, he gave us what he termed some doctrines to digest. Instead of showing that a Baptist church is a Scriptural body, he spent a full hour and a quarter in trying to prove that the Catholics and Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists and Campbellites are anti-Scriptural and anti-Christian. He told a great deal of truth, but told it in a very sharp way. He seemed to me to want to strike and bite and kick and sting. It may be it is just his way, but it made me feel like the man was on the war path, and somehow I did not feel like praying at the close of the sermon as I usually do when Brother Slaughter is through and as I used to at Black Jack Ridge after listening to good Brother Brooks.

Brother Sharpe announced that he would preach at night on Baptism. Hearing of the excitement produced by his morning sermon, a great crowd came at night. Some people and some preachers are wonderfully encouraged at the appearance of a crowd. But there was nothing in the faces of that great night congregation to comfort me. Sallie Collins said late

in the evening that she was half inclined to stay at home; but calling to mind the resolution we passed when we moved to town, to the effect that we would stick to the church at all times, we called our children around our home altar, and together prayed that the Spirit of the Lord should be upon us and upon the people.

Promptly at 7:30 Brother Sharpe was in the pulpit. His eyes beamed with delight at the sight of the great throng. He seemed impressed with the idea that he could and would settle the baptismal controversy, and not only prevent any more Baptists from going to other denominations, but would convert a majority of the Pedo-baptists and Campbellites in town to Baptist views. He brought an armful of books with him into the pulpit. He was on his metal. He had much to say about history and Greek. He talked about a good many things the people did not know anything about, and concerning which they had no means of ascertaining the facts. He did not spend much time proving that immersion is baptism, and that believers are the Scriptural subjects of baptism, but spent a full hour preaching against Infant Baptism, and showing that sprinkling and pouring are ordinances of man; that they are of Roman Catholic origin; anti-Scriptural, illogical, unreasonable and subversive of New Testa-

ment teachings. He charged that those who practiced infant baptism were kidnappers; that it was anti-Republican and anti-Democratic, and utterly opposed to the doctrine of soul liberty to take a little child in his unconscious infancy and perform for him and against his will an ordinance in the name of baptism that would be in his way in mature years when he came to confront the words of Jesus: "He that believeth and is baptized."

Of course nobody was converted. Nobody expected anybody to repent of sin and believe in Christ to the salvation of the soul under that sort of preaching. Many of the people went away mad. Hearing of the morning sermon, and the announcement of the subject for the night, a great many came expecting to get mad and intending to get mad. The fact is some people are never so happy as when they are mad at the Baptists. We have some people in town who seem to think that Baptists are really mean because they believe in individuality and independence of thought and action in all matters of religion. They seem to think we ought to compromise our convictions, say that black is white and white is black. They get mad because we do not invite them to come to the Lord's table, though that invitation implies that we accept sprinkling for baptism, and that

their church organizations are as Scriptural as ours.

Going home after the sermon, Sallie Collins and your "Bro. Jake" walked slowly and were sad. As we did not feel like talking we listened. One said, in passing us, in an excited way: "These Baptists are the most bigoted, narrow contracted and conceited people in the world." Another one said: "Why a preacher does not practice what he preaches is strange to me. That preacher is doubtless a good man, and will advise people to attend to their own business, and avoid meddling with the affairs of their neighbors, and then get right up in the pulpit and spend an hour and a half picking other churches to pieces. He believes that immersion alone is baptism, and that believers alone ought to be baptized, and that nobody ought to eat the Lord's supper until he repents, believes and is baptized and joins the church. Why not preach that and let ours alone? I do not see any good to come of such preaching as he did to-night, and I am almost inclined to say I will not go to that Baptist church any more. I do love to hear Brother Slaughter preach. He seems to be a decided Baptist, and speaks his doctrine right out, but as often as I have heard him, he has never got after us as that preacher did to-night."

The following thoughts passed through my mind as I went home, and during the long hours of that almost sleepless night:

Vinegar will not catch flies. A horse on the grass may want corn ever so bad, but if he knows you are going to whip him as soon as he gets home, and before the ten big, clean, Tennessee-looking ears of corn, accompanied by the well-cured bundle of fodder, is offered him he is apt to stay and risk his chances on the grass. It is impossible to break a cow from kicking by beating her. When I was a boy in the country, we had a good coon dog. The coons were bad. They caught chickens and ducks and goslings, and ate up a great deal of our green corn. With the assistance of old Tige we managed to keep the coons thinned out and scared off. The dog was always shy about letting us put our hands on him. About the only way to catch him was to hold bread in one hand and catch him with the other. One day he snapped a chicken. Father got some bread and caught him and whipped him. Another day he growled at the baby, and at another time he ventured into the kitchen. Father caught him every time, and beat him severely. After that whenever father called the dogs to give them bread before going coon-hunting,

Tige would run, and in that way he spoiled the only good coon dog we ever had.

It seems to me that the best way to do is just to preach the Gospel, and tell the people what the Bible says, and let all outside matters alone. The Bible does not say a word about sprinkling and pouring for baptism. It does say a great deal about going "down into and straightway coming up out of the water," and about being buried in baptism—being planted in the likeness of His death, and raised in the likeness of His resurrection. Christ and his apostles never said a word about infants being baptized. I do not see any use in wasting time on such things. All the chance for sprinkling or pouring for baptism, and for infants as subjects for baptism, depends on inferences, and when the people get at that they can infer anything.

Brother Brooks and Brother Slaughter suit me and Sallie Collins. They preach Christ, believer's baptism and holy living, and never in a sermon step outside of the Bible to advertise anybody. In politics I am in favor of free trade and sailors' rights. In religion I am in favor of preaching the truth and letting false doctrine advertise itself. JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER TWENTY-FOUR.

AVOID EXTREMES—COTTON AND HOGS—
CLASSES—THE MORTGAGE PAID—POOR TO
THE FRONT—SALLIE COLLINS DECLINES
ADVICE.

One extreme causes another. In ploughing, the middle furrow is the hardest one to run. To be moderate and temperate in all things—in eating and drinking and talking about people behind their backs—requires the wisdom of Solomon, the patience of Job and the perseverance of Paul. People will somehow be governed by their prejudices; forgetting that truth more frequently lies on middle ground. They meet an error by getting as far from it as reason, pushed by passion, can drive them. The weakness of the Arminian's plan of salvation drives some of our brethren clear off into the inconsistencies of hyper-calvinism, and the imperfections of our members, who make loud pretensions to clear and unmistakable evidences of conversion, force the conviction upon the minds of some

good, but thoughtless people that regeneration is not in all cases a necessary qualification for membership in a church.

One year when I lived in the Blackjack Ridge neighborhood, cotton was worth 15 cents a pound and the people made a full crop. Of course that made money plentiful. The next year the acreage in cotton was double. Hogs were all killed off and sold, and only a small amount of corn, wheat and oats were put in cultivation. All agreed that it did not pay to raise corn and hogs on ground that would bring a bale of cotton to the acre, and when cotton was fifteen cents per pound. Under this high pressure, all-cotton effort, the seasons were fine for corn and small grain, but the drouth came just in time to give us only a quarter of a bale to the acre, and the best price for the best cotton was only eight cents a pound. In spite of my desire, in the midst of the general excitement, to go with the neighbors in their haste to get rich on cotton, Sallie Collins insisted that we had better go slow, and plant the usual crop in the usual way. She was opposed to killing all the pigs, believed in giving the usual attention to the garden and orchard, and begged me to raise plenty of corn and small grain. Her judgment, as it generally is, proved to be good, and with us it was the

most prosperous year, financially, we had during all the years we spent at Blackjack Ridge. Since then whenever people get to drifting in crowds from one position to another, I think of cattle drifting from a snow storm into a desert and at the same time remember how Sallie Collins kept me from going wild over that all-cotton mania. It takes a heap of thinking to make a consistent Christian.

Now you remember that this town church, when Sallie and Jake Collins moved here, was run principally by old Brother Dolittle, and two or three other wealthy men. They were always to the front, and the poor people and laborers of the town when they came to church took back seats. It was commonly reported that this was the wealthy and aristocratic church of the town. A large amount of wealth and aristocracy, accompanied with the spirit of dictation is a heavy burden for a church to carry. After paying up brother Simpson's salary, I set my heart to break the force of this monopoly in the hands of Brother Dolittle and company. The old brother held a mortgage of a thousand dollars on our church house and was getting 12 per cent. paid semi-annually. Quite a number of the members were in debt to him on their homesteads, and for borrowed money. I got the deacons together and suggested a plan to

lift the thousand dollar mortgage. I owed the Lord, under my covenant with him to give a tenth—five hundred dollars. I agreed to give one hundred dollars of the thousand to get it started, and had an understanding with Sallie Collins that we would give two hundred rather than allow the mortgage and its accompanying evil influence to hold their position. To allow a church to owe one of its members a thousand dollars, pay him one hundred and twenty dollars interest every year, while he only gives five dollars a year to the Pastor, and all told, two dollars and a half to the missions of the church combined, never has and never will work well. So we paid it all up.

To aid still further in getting rid of a monopoly in the church, that seemed to be grinding the faces of the poor, I urged all the parties in debt to these rich brethren to work hard, economize and pay their debts as speedily as possible. In my private labors and in my prayer meeting talks I have urged practical religion, and in urging the duty enjoined upon the members to love one another, I have not failed to repeat the saying of Paul often: "Owe no man anything, but to love one another." I induced brother Slaughter to preach a sermon on the evils of debt. That sermon added to what had been said and done before, worked up and

alarmed a large number of our brethren. I am glad we have got a preacher whose private life is without reproach and who loves God and truth well enough to cry aloud and spare not in the presence of whisky and adultery and fraud and oppression. While relieving ourselves of this monopoly and consequent oppression, another evil faces us that I never dreamed of until recently. It is possible to break the evil influences of a rich man, a dancing master and a saloon keeper, but it seems utterly out of the question to squelch the Devil. His resources are well nigh infinite, and will likely so continue till the millennium. These poor people and laborers in our church always associate the names of Gould and Vanderbilt, and numberless corporations with the names of old Brother Dolittle and other rich men in our church and community. Publicly and privately they declare their intention to free themselves from bondage. Under the preaching of Brother Slaughter old Brother Dolittle has been greatly benefitted. I always believed he was a converted man; though at times he had a poor way of showing it. He is more mellow and sympathetic—less inclined to dictate—pays more attention to the opinions of the brethren, and is beginning to learn the meaning of that scripture that teaches us to es-

teem others better than ourselves. The number of poor people and laborers that of late, crowd our church in all our services, seems to gratify him as much as it does Jake and Sallie Collins. We have paid off the mortgage on the church property and quite a number of our Brethren who were in debt to Brother Dolittle and others, have settled up. While this was going on the evils of monopoly and usury, and the sins of oppression, led by the rich men were freely and constantly canvassed. Among our wealthy members there are some men of piety and humility and prudence. Impressed with the fact that the poor and laboring part of the church were dissatisfied with their presence on the front seats, and in frequent consultation with the pastor, they indicated an intention to take back seats. The pastor told them that it would not work well, but they persisted and the general management of the church has and is passing into different hands. The statement is more frequently heard now than formerly, that "the poor men have the gospel preached to them." Brother Slaughter was requested to preach from the text: "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world?" "Blessed are the poor," is held up against that other statement of Christ: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God." Some-

how the idea is prevailing in the church that it is mean to be rich and that there is a virtue in poverty. They seem to think that when James condemned the spirit that put the man on the front seat with the gold ring and the goodly apparel, and the poor man in vile raiment on a footstool, that he meant that all rich people ought to take back seats at church and put poor people always to the front. The opinion prevails that Christ came to seek and to save the poor and the laboring man; that these are favorites in heaven; and that claims may be entered at the door of Heaven on the ground that men have been poor on earth, and had a hard time. Not only are the front seats and special attention claimed at church on this ground, but demands are made on the pastor that he shall let the rich and business part of the membership take care of themselves, while he gives his time and his ministry exclusively to the poor. Things are getting in a curious fix. When this demand was made to give special attention to the laboring poor, I was in sympathy with it. I talked for it and worked for it, but in some way the Devil got ahead of us in our work of charity and as sure as the Lord lives we are cornered. These poor men are honest and earnest. Many of these rich men are just as honest and earnest. While the poor insist that the rich be sent to the

rear because they are rich, they at the same time insist that the rich go to the front on the subscription lists. The doctrine is freely set forth that men ought to give as they are prospered. Under the present state of affairs the contributions of the rich are not coming in as freely as they did, the poor have not increased their gifts and we are getting behind on the current expenses of the church.

I have thought much about this matter lately. Sallie Collins and I have read the Bible and talked about but little else except those poor and rich members for weeks. As we are neither rich nor poor, learned or unlearned, high nor low, princes nor peasants, aristocracy nor members of the vulgar herd, but rather betwixt and between all these classes, they all talk with us and express their opinions freely. Having heard them all and studied them all, my opinion is that a man is a man after all. My judgment is that God will send a poor man to hell as quick as he will a rich man, unless he is clothed with the righteousness of Christ. I believe that God is no respecter of persons, and that a man who struts around in this world, showing his rich feathers at church like a vain peacock, is a fool, both for the want of sense and good raising. Some of these people are feeling very unkindly towards each other on

account of the differences among these classes, and it is going to take a wonderful amount of grace to tide us over this sea of conflict and confusion. The rich and poor see already the real devilment there is in this issue, and we have asked Brother Slaughter to preach a sermon from Prov. 22: 2. "The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all." I will report the result. From one extreme men go to another. What we thought was a sign of the millennium has resulted in evil. Sallie Collins and I were never sadder over church matters, and for once the good woman declines to advise me what to say.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER TWENTY-FIVE.

REVENGE—THE BIG LOCKOUT—THE BOYCOTT—
PREACHING POLITICS—FIGHT THE JEWS—
A GRAND OCCASION—THE KEY—RECON-
CILIATION.

Sallie Collins never failed in understanding the signs of the times and in giving good counsel in the midst of difficulties till we came upon this spirit of alienation and envy among the poor and rich as classes. The good woman has many friends among the rich and poor. She has never felt any envy in her heart toward those with more money and better houses, finer clothes and more accomplishments than we have had or are able to give our children. She says we have more than we deserve; that it is no comfort to her to live among people poorer than we are, and that the presence of rich people and gay clothing does not afflict her with any loss of sleep. She seems just as willing to work in attending to her domestic affairs as she did at Black Jack Ridge. The rich seem to love her because she is at ease among them,

and the poor and unfortunate love her because she never turns a deaf ear to their calls. She has helped me with all her might to get the daily laborers and poor people to church, and to get them to take an active part in church matters. She has labored earnestly with the rich and well-to-do brethren and sisters, and by her Christian advice and example, urged them to dress plainly at church and during their visits to the poor. Hard as it is to get folks to give up their pride, and their customs and habits based on it, Sallie Collins has certainly had a fine influence in that direction. Plain dressing and sociability have certainly been on the increase. Knowing the effect this was bound to produce, Satan went to the front and stirred up the poor and laboring classes with the idea that their time had come, and urged them to strike for position and power. He assured them that the columns of the rich were wavering, and that they might easily gain the victory in church as well as in the workshop, and along the lines of commerce on land and sea. How easy it is to convince people that they are imposed on. Many a schoolboy at the mere mention of infringement upon his personal liberty or rights in any way has been induced to join a strike to defy a teacher's authority and turn

him out. Many a good man has been led to adopt a policy of revenge and illegal measures in resisting the wrongs of rich men and corporations. It always has seemed to me that there only three ways for a Christian to resist wrong. One is to reason with the oppressor; the next is to overcome him with kindness, and "heap coals of fire on his head." As a last resort we may appeal to the civil law. If in these three efforts we fail, then as Christians we must wait for the judgment of the great day.

The news of the big lockout in eastern factories, and the great strike in Chicago, has intensified the hate between these opposing elements in society, and just as our church was about to get concessions from the rich in dress and social customs, Satan has fired the hearts of some of our members with the spirit John had when he wanted to punish the people with fire who refused to receive and entertain the Savior and His Apostles. It is one thing to *love* a man into a measure and quite another thing to *force* him into it. A rich man has as many rights as a poor man, and when the laboring poor combine to illegally compel the rich, the old adage is reasserted that it is right to "fight the devil with fire." The boycott and lockout were cut from the same piece of cloth in the loom of the devil. Either one is a con-

spiracy against liberty, home and free institutions.

The announcement was widely circulated that Brother Slaughter would preach on monopolies and the consequent antagonism of classes. Some approved of his preaching on this subject and others objected. One objector said the preacher ought to confine himself to the gospel and leave such questions to other men. Just at this point I thought to myself that the gospel meant good news, and that if in the name of Jesus Christ our pastor could show these people how the middle wall of partition between the rich and poor in our church could be broken down, it would be right good news, and in my heart I believed the message would please God. Another objector said that he was opposed to the preacher entering the domain of politics, and as there was likely to be an issue on this question in political circles, he thought Brother Slaughter had better let it alone. He was in his feelings greatly opposed to the union of Church and State. A third objector said that the discussion of this question would antagonize some people and break the power of the preacher's influence, at least over some. In this statement I was forcibly reminded of the advice a politic brother gave to his newly elected pastor. With bated breath,

and anxious countenance, and with great earnestness he approached the preacher about an hour before the delivery of his first sermon in his new pastorate. He warned him against saying anything on the subject of whisky—either drinking or selling it. The reason given was that one of the deacons, a man of wealth and liberality, drank it, and that a saloon man, whose wife was a member of the church, and who contributed largely to the salary, would be present, and that anything said about whisky, and especially the traffic in it would be offensive. He further advised him to say nothing against dancing, as some of the wealthiest and most influential families in the church sent their children to dancing schools and gave dancing parties at their houses. He was advised against urging everybody to give, on the ground that many of our poor believe that the rich ought to furnish all the money. He said that a great many of the other denominations would attend church that day to hear the new preacher, and that he must not preach on total depravity, and the design of baptism, lest he offend the Campbellites—that he must not preach on church government and ritualism, lest he offend the Episcopalians; that he must not preach on the qualifications of candidates for baptism, and what it takes to constitute baptism, lest it offend

the Methodists and Presbyterians, and that any reference to the communion question would offend them all. He said further that the members of the church were intermarried with members of all the other denominations, and that none of them must be offended. When the preacher looked over the list of subjects excluded, he very anxiously asked the brother what to preach. He was promptly informed that he might safely preach against the Jews, as none of them lived in town, and that all parties would be pleased to hear him preach against pictures in the church, as there would be no Catholics at meeting.

With all these objections and warnings, Brother Slaughter ascended his pulpit in the presence of a vast assembly, and announced his text: "The rich and poor meet together; the Lord is the Maker of them all."

He is a good man. It was a grand occasion and he preached a grand sermon. He proved the brotherhood of the race, and insisted that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth." On that basis he showed the universal obligation of men in all lands and all nations to obey Christ's order to "repent and believe the Gospel." Regardless of a man's color, nationality or estate, God, the Maker of all, inquires after the state of

the heart. As clear as sunlight it was made apparent that sin was sin in the palace and hut alike, and that it was equally hateful to God. "God is no respecter of persons," and Cornelius was as much entitled to salvation through faith in Christ as any son of Abraham. He showed that Abraham and Job and Joseph of Aramathea were all rich men, and that mechanics and fishermen were put side by side with these in the kingdom of God, and that it took just the same amount of blood to save a poor man as it did to cure a rich man; that riches are nothing and that poverty is nothing in the plan of salvation. He told us of Dives in hell and gave the reasons for his going there, stating at the same time that a poor man would be sent there for the same reason. Abraham was rich and went to heaven, If other rich men would believe God as he did, it would be accounted to them as righteousness as in his case. His description of the Lord's poor and the devil's poor we will not soon forget. He tore away the mask and revealed the iniquity of all class legislation; and when the lost but saved woman of Samaria was put side by side with Lydia, and it was further shown that all classes in morals and earthly estate were in the presence of the Saviour when He said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden,

and I will give you rest," there was a thrill of joy passed through my soul that made me say involuntarily, "this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." He put us all together around the table of the Lord, with the emblem of the cross as the common center; but the climax was not reached until we saw through that sermon Lazarus, the poor and afflicted one, in the bosom of Abraham, in heaven. As Brother Slaughter shouted at the top of that voice that has so much strength and melody, it sounded to me as if the words were descending from heaven, as he exclaimed, "Look yonder; poor Lazarus, faithful Abraham; the poor and the rich have met together and the Lord is the Maker and Saviour of all." All eyes swam with tears; all hearts were in unison, who loved our common Lord and Master.

As the voice of the preacher died away old Brother Dolittle rose from about the middle of the house (for years he occupied the front-seat) and said: "I am an old man, full of weakness and bowing under the infirmities of years. To-day I feel my imperfections and sins as I never did before. I have always felt it my duty to aid the poor. You all know that about all I have ever done was in that direction. I have fed and clothed a number of widows and or-

phans. It is a great comfort to my old withered heart that some of the orphans I have been sending to school have been converted and will live for Christ when I am gone. It is hard for me to live as I want to live. I have loved money, and it has been to me the root of many an evil. Somehow I anticipated this meeting, and yesterday wrote my will, giving a large part of my earthly estate to the different objects for which this church is laboring. My time is short, and I realize it. With all my imperfections, 'I know Whom I have believed, and that He is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.' I ask forgiveness from God and man, and intend during the remainder of my life to co-operate with this church as I have never done before." As he said this he approached the pastor and gave him his hand, after which he took a seat on the pulpit step.

"Thank God!" went up from many a happy heart.

On the left of the preacher sat a poor man, in vile raiment. With tears running down his cheeks; in the presence of that vast multitude, he told how he had envied Brother Dolittle his wealth, and how, under the influence of his companions he had hated him. He closed by saying, "Under the teachings of this sermon

and the impressions of this hour, I see things in a different light;" and as he choked and could say no more, he went to Brother Doolittle, and giving him his hand said, "Let us sit down together."

A plainly dressed, honest laboring man rose up, far back in the audience, and said: "A great burden has been rolled from my heart. My lot has been a hard one. Until to-day I have never been satisfied with it. The rich need the poor as a means of cultivating their benevolence, and the poor need the rich. Without capital, what could we do? I believe I am saved through the blood of Jesus, and yet, as the head of the labor organization in this town, and utterly ignorant of what that old man on the pulpit step has been doing for the poor and unfortunate, I have abused him on more occasions than one. I ask his forgiveness and the forbearance of every one whom I have wronged." With this he walked rapidly down the aisle, while tears streamed from both his eyes, and gave old Brother Doolittle and the poorly clad brother, one his right and the other his left hand at the same time. Audible voices were heard all through the house, some saying one thing and some another, but every Christian was happy.

Just as Sallie Collins grasped my arm next to her with both her hands and was saying, "Bless the Lord, my dear husband, this question is settled at last," Brother Slaughter began singing:

"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above."

The three brethren who went to the front were the center of attraction. Everybody seemed to want to shake hands with each one of them. How many people said, 'I have done wrong,' and how many said, 'I freely forgive,' and just how long we stayed there I do not know. I care less, but I do know that:

The Lord came down our souls to greet,
And glory crowned the mercy seat.

The darkest hour is just before day. It seems to me I will never doubt the Lord again. All day long I have been going about saying, "God bless Brother Dolittle; God bless the poor man and the laborer; God bless Brother Slaughter; God bless Sallie Collins."

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER TWENTY-SIX.

CONVERTED SINGERS TO THE FRONT—PURE
RELIGION—DRAWING — RELIGION CONTA-
GIOUS—A STRANGE DOG—A PLAYFUL COLT
—INTELLECT AND EMOTION.

I am just from the church, and hasten to tell you of the wonderful things that are transpiring. Who could have supposed that such a change could take place? I cannot realize that I ever attended service in that house that was as cold and formal as it really was when we came to town. For the first year there was a deadness that makes me feel chilly now as I think of it. Scarcely anything now seems as it did then. The leader of our songs is a good man and the head of a family. He is a man of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. He has been duly appointed by the church over the worship of song. Bro. Slaughter says he is never afraid of offending him. The organist is a good, pious woman. At the organ and during the sermon she looks and acts like a wor-

shipper. Tears often gather in her eyes as she sings some of the old songs you and I knew when we were children. It is the same with her as she sings the new songs. We have at last induced the brethren to buy song books enough to scatter over the house, and everybody seems to love to sing with our present leaders. The fact is, our singers are good musicians, and in addition are sensible, Sunday-School, prayer-meeting, wide-awake, religious folks, so different from the crowd that performed for Bro. Slaughter the day he took charge.

This is the first letter I have ever written you on Sunday; but it seems to me that I cannot wait till to-morrow to write as I usually do. I am afraid I will forget something. The meeting last Sunday has been the talk of the town for the past week. That Bro. Dolittle should have given up his hard-headed notions and publicly confessed his sins, declared his intention to co-operate with the pastor and church during the remainder of his life, and that he had actually made his will, giving a large part of his vast estate to Baptist enterprises—dividing it up between the Buckner Orphans Home, our Baptist Colleges and State Missions—not only surprised our members, but amazed the people of the town.

The poor brother in vile raiment who went

and gave Bro. Dolittle his hand has for years, I am told, been soreheaded, and growling at home and along the streets, when anybody would stop and listen at him, about the meanness of rich people, the extravagance of our well-to-do members, both in their food and raiment, and their general way of living. As he had no fine carriage to ride in it seemed to vex him as those in better circumstances drove past him. Much valuable time was lost in this way, and a large amount of envy and malice unconsciously accumulated in the poor man's heart. It is passing strange that some poor men, who conclude they are favorites in Heaven because of their poverty, will allow themselves sold out to the devil for such a miserable mess of pottage. The people all thought it strange that this man so readily and quickly fell in love with Bro. Dolittle, the man whom he had abused above all other men.

Many of the laboring men complain that the head center of the labor organization in the town should publicly surrender to Bro. Dolittle on a confession and statement that were made in less than five minutes, and so readily forgave the man whom they regarded as one of their chief oppressors. They thought the old man ought to be received on trial, and let him hold that position at least six months, before being re-

ceived into full connection and fellowship. Still, all agreed that if those rich men, who professed to be Christians, would cease their oppressions and be kind to the poor and unfortunate—that if the poor would cease all their unreasonable exactions of the rich and submit patiently to their lot in life, under the providence of God, and if the laboring man would combine with his brethren of sweat and toil in a lawful, Christian and quiet way to accomplish his ends, the whole community would be glad. The conflict between the classes is of the devil, and nothing but the religion of Jesus will ever effectually wipe it out.

The effect of religion on those three men last Sunday, publicly confessing their sins to one another, and publicly forgiving each other, had a *drawing* influence. It drew Sallie Collins. It drew Bro. Slaughter. It drew me.

Somehow, it drew a large number to the weekly prayer-meeting, and it drew a vast crowd to church to-day. Brother Slaughter was in his very best preaching outfit. The helmet of salvation glistened. The shield of faith was prominent. The breast plate of righteousness was well adjusted. The girdle of truth was strong and closely drawn around his loins. As he walked into the pulpit everybody could see that his feet were shod

with the gospel of peace. His text was like an arrow. With a deep and solemn pathos he said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." He had not finished his introduction till I was in the presence of Jesus, hanging on the Cross. He showed how Christ allowed his enemies to lift him up to that tree, bearing our sins to accomplish our salvation and the will of God. As he preached my pride and passion and lust were nailed to that beam of wood with Christ, and I could truly say, "I am crucified with Christ." Under the influence of the sentiments that gushed from the preacher's heart as he stood in the shadow of the cross of the dying Christ, all could see how a sinner could confess and hate and give up his sins, and how everybody, with a spirit like that of the forgiving, merciful Christ, could forgive everybody else. It was a drawing time. Bro. Dolittle was drawn back to his old place on the front seat. Nobody objected. The poor man and the laboring man were drawn to seats near by him. "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

Religion has a strange effect on people. It breaks out like the measles, sometimes when you are not expecting it. It is catching like the smallpox. It makes folks awful

sick sometimes before it breaks out; and when it goes into them, in the form of a relapse into sin they often "forget that they have been purged from their old sins," and, like the prodigal son, go to the very verge of desperation. The truth of the whole matter is, that I think a great deal and feel a great deal in my efforts to be a Christian. Thought and sympathy, mind and heart:—With these oars Bro. Slaughter seems to be paddling his Gospel boat through the community. When he thinks and feels he acts, and his disease is catching. When a boy I noticed that when a strange dog came to our house and commenced snapping at every dog that came near him, all our dogs would soon catch the snapping fever. I also remember that when a playful dog came, soon all the dogs, big and little, would be playing hide and seek. A kicking horse will set a whole lot full of horses in a uproar, while a playful colt will put the whole of them into a glee, including even the treacherous mules. Like begets like, and I am day by day feeling that the good Lord recognizes this principle in the affairs of religion.

People as a rule are divided into two classes, the intellectual and the emotional. The emotional crowd banks on tears and groans and

shouting. No amount of thought and eloquence in the pulpit is appreciated unless there is a great amount of feeling mixed with it. The intellectual class wants thought and argument and order and quiet. These are afraid of sympathy and tears. One class is offended if the preacher cries and is noisy; the other class is afraid of him if he does not cry and make confusion. Now, my impression is that the emotional brethren are a little more intellectual than they think they are, and that the intellectual brethren are more emotional than they imagine they are. All men have some mind and some heart.

People of all classes are flocking to our church of late. There seems to be thought enough in our preacher for the most intellectual and tears enough for the most sympathetic. Anyhow, they come. At the close of this morning's service six professed a change of heart and four were received for baptism. A number publicly asked the people to pray for them, and altogether it was a great day for a town church.

Our boys are doing well. Sallie Collins is greatly concerned about our little girls, and asks that you help us pray for them. The elder

one we think is under conviction, and anxiously await her salvation. How happy we would be if this church were straightened out and all our children were saved.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER TWENTY-SEVEN.

A GLAD THOUGHT—A HUNDRED BAPTISMS—
A DAUGHTER SAVED—EVERYBODY HAPPY—
SIXTY DAY LEAVE—CARE FOR A
PREACHER'S WIFE.

I am still glad when I remember that Sallie Collins is my wife. Though I know she is my superior in goodness and practical sense, she never says anything that indicates that she is at all aware of it. With such a wife, and four such children as call her mother, it seems to me that any man ought to be happy. Sam Jones says: "When God gives a man a wife and six children he has done a heap for him, but when he gives him a wife and pug dog he has not done much for him." I rather like the sentiment embodied in that statement.

I am glad of the ministry of our good Brother Brooks and its effect on my family. I am glad we moved to town, and happy that I ever met Brother Slaughter. Though rejoicing over all these things, the happiest hours of

my life have past since I last wrote you. This town church has been turned upside down, and the whole community is in much the same fix. That reconciliation between Bro. Dolittle and the poor man and laborer seemed to draw all the people together, and the glory of the Lord appeared in their midst. It is wonderful how religion will cause people to confess their sins to God and to one another, and how closely it brings them together in love. We have had a wonderful revival. I have for weeks had so much to do and so much to enjoy that I have had no time to write. More than a hundred people have been baptized. Day by day, with no preacher but Brother Slaughter, the house was filled, and at night we sat under the trees in the church-yard, and heard the man of God telling the way of salvation.

Nearly all our members have joined the choir and prayer-meeting, and most of them have agreed to come to Sunday-school. I never was so happy before, and never happy on so large a scale. Our eldest daughter was among the converts baptized. Our youngest and last one to be saved is serious, and while Sallie Collins drops a tear for the unsaved child, her face is wreathed in smiles when she speaks of the three that have been saved and this mighty revival,

that has so signally changed the atmosphere of this town. What a change since the first week I spent in it. Instead of standing around on the street, counting and reading signs and feeling lonesome, as I did in days gone by, everybody seems to be glad to see Jake Collins on the street, and Jake Collins seems glad to see everybody else. Instead of standing alone in the aisle at church, after the benediction, watching the people hurry away, pell-mell to their homes, as if the house were on fire, the people linger to tell each other of new converts and of their own joy in the good work.

I have found out that religion is just as good in town as it is at Black Jack Ridge. It brings down high looks; destroys selfishness and covetousness, and overcomes worldly-mindedness in town just as effectually as in the country.

In the midst of all this, one thing has occurred that I do not exactly understand. As I told you before, we have all sorts of folks in our church. If we did not have them before this revival, we certainly have them now. People from all classes joined. There is quite a number of our members who are from the North and East. After the services of the protracted meeting closed, the question of rest and recreation was raised. A brother, of wealth and high standing, rose in a business meeting

and moved that the pastor, who had worked so faithfully in the meeting, be granted a furlough of sixty days; that his salary be continued, and that a sufficient amount be raised in addition to bear his expenses to the White Sulphur Springs in Virginia, and return, spending some time at Niagara Falls. It was promptly seconded, and before the motion could be put a number of brethren spoke out amounts they would give for the expenses of the trip. Among the subscribers was a number of young converts.

I spoke to Sall e Collins, and told her the thing did not strike me favorably. Brother Slaughter was not sick; he had not worked in the meeting any harder than some of the rest of us. It is true he preached once or twice every day, and did a good deal of visiting, but then he did nothing else. His wife and children kept everything going at home. He had plenty of time to rest and take a nap in daytime if he chose. Many others, who worked hard in the meeting and never missed a service, had to run their business and keep the household affairs going all the time. While I was suggesting these things to Sallie Collins, and the subscription was going on, one of the brethren from the North suggested that an annual leave of absence for the pastor was the custom in city churches, and that the present condition of the

church would justify it. I made several motions to rise and speak, but Sallie Collins counseled silence and the motion prevailed. I felt sure that Brother Slaughter would rise and object, but he kept silent too. The motion prevailed and the necessary amount of money for the trip was raised. Of course I submitted to the action of the church, but I did not give anything. Our benevolence fund had not been exhausted, but I think I can do more good with it. In this decision Sallie Collins acquiesced.

I feel that the step is a wrong one, for the following reasons:

1. It seems to me a poor thing for an old hen to go visiting immediately after a brood of sixteen chickens has been hatched. There is an amount of clucking and scratching to do that would not be safe to trust to the chickens at large. I may not have sense enough to see the good that is going to come of this measure, but it does seem to me that Brother Slaughter never was needed anywhere more than here just now. Besides, he is not sick—just a little tired. A great many of these people who have joined us know very little of Baptist doctrines and usages. Who will teach them and guide them in their meetings? If I had time, I lack the sense. Some of our members who have

the sense have too much to do in their business to spare the time.

2. The Savior and Apostles rested of nights ordinarily, like other people, and at very short intervals, but do you think either one of them ever took a sixty days furlough, and for recreation ever made a pilgrimage to Babylon or Egypt at the expense of the brethren? I love Brother Slaughter and praise God for sending him here, but I am bothered, and so is Sallie Collins.

3. If ever a woman on earth did her duty as a preacher's wife, that woman is Sister Slaughter. She rarely ever missed a service, day or night, during the revival. She never lets home affairs interfere with Brother Slaughter and his work. She and her children attend to all the domestic affairs, leaving the pastor free to devote himself to the ministry. The member of the Slaughter family that needs recreation is the pastor's wife. During that meeting they had a great deal of company, and if anybody in this town needs rest and recreation, that woman is our pastor's wife. You know me well enough to know that I would not leave Sallie Collins at home to drudge away for sixty days in the summer, while I went off to rest and get cool.

I have deliberately made up my mind, without advising with Sallie Collins at all, that I

will make up a purse among those that see this thing as I do, and hire a servant for the pastor's wife during his absence, and let her have some rest and recreation too. I am determined to see that the pastor gets his salary, and hereafter instead of helping to get the preacher a new hat or boots or suit of clothes, my donations and all outside help shall be given to the pastor's wife. I am sure Brother Slaughter himself will approve of my course. A cup of cold water given to Sallie Collins in the name of a disciple can never be forgotten by

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER TWENTY-EIGHT.

DENGUE.—ITS SYMPTOMS.—TOUCH-ME-NOTS.—
THE PREACHER'S DAUGHTER.—THE DEACON'S SON.—A NOBLE CONFESSION.

Since I last wrote you we have had some peculiar trials. Sallie Collins has been sick. The children took the dengue about the time I expected to write you, and the cooking fell to my lot. I scalded my hand so badly that writing has been an impossibility.

In my efforts to milk the cow with my left hand the operation displeased the creature, and she gave me a kick on my left knee that has kept me in bed most of the time. So much sickness being in town, we could get no help, the cow could not be milked, butter and milk gave out, and patience grew scarcer as the hours went by. To cap the whole brood of little ills, I took dengue myself. I reckon you never had it, because if you did the *Texas Baptist and Herald* would have stopped, just as our affairs have for at least a month. No man could have

the dengue and keep such a paper as yours going at the same time. When a boy I had ear-ache, toothache, a stone-bruise on my heel, risings on my knee and elbow and under my arm, and a carbuncle on the back of my neck; I had chills and fever and sick headache, rheumatism and neuralgia, and the fidgets Sunday evenings when all the boys were at play and I was forced to stay in the house in order to keep the Sabbath day holy—but nothing ever touched me like the dengue. For my life I do not see why it does not kill folks. The fever, the aches, the taste in your mouth, the sleeplessness and general feeling of meanness, ought to convince anybody that has it of human depravity, without so much as a suggestion of the doctrine in the Bible.

Thanks to a kind Heavenly Father I am about over it, Sallie Collins is well and the children are peeled off and slick as moles. Our other cow is giving milk and my scalded hand is about well and my crutches are laid aside. My correspondence with you in the past has been a great comfort to us, and I hope you will answer this letter with your accustomed promptness.

The amount of suffering in this world is great, and though the people live in sight and hearing of it, it makes but little impression upon us till

we are actually overtaken by it. We ought to give more attention to the sick and aid the unfortunate and helpless. At one time during my struggle with the dengue, I did not care much whether I recovered or not. The impression that my back would always remain out of joint did not make life particularly desirable. So people, in many ways, seem to get down and despondent and helpless.

When I had the dengue it was hard for me to be patient; I was nervous. The slamming of the door shocked me. At times the light was exceeding painful. The howling of the dog and the mewling of the cat during the long, sleepless night made me sensitive, and at times the feeling came over me that these things were done on purpose to afflict me, and the intention to resent the injury was often fostered, provided I should get opportunity.

Some of the members of our church have got an intellectual or moral or religious or irreligious or some other kind of a disease that works on them much the same way. Their eyes seem at times to resent light; their ears are sensitive as touch-me nots. Words spoken to them in great kindness, but plainly, cause them to fly all to pieces, just as the sensitive plant I refer to will do, when at a certain stage of its existence you touch it. Their imaginations are

very active. When they walk into church they suppose that the two ladies in the corner near the pulpit, who are whispering about the latest style of hat, the new-comer to town or something about the pastor or his sermon the past Sabbath, or something else, no telling what, are actually talking about them in an improper way, when the fact exists, all the same, that their entrance was unobserved. They are sensitive because some of us are not intimate with them. This we would be glad to do, but are afraid of them. Their feelings are so tender and their skin is so thin that many a time a kind look and a plain brotherly piece of counsel will break the skin and pierce the most delicate nerve of the whole body. Then, in some cases the party trying to do good is not much better off than the man by the wayside struck by lightning.

I do wish you would write some articles on this subject, and get some of our good brethren and sisters to put some of their feelings in their pockets and leave others of them at home. They spread out too much. If you walk on the church floor you step on them. Trading in the street they scream at you to be careful what you are doing. Their feelings are in the air, in the light, on the ground, floor, sidewalk, in the store and everywhere, and they constantly

keep you uneasy. Some of our people have too many feelings. A man with more poultry and dogs than he can feed and control and use profitably will soon afflict his neighbor, and so will those people who let their feelings loose to be trampled upon by others. Besides the unnecessary pain sensitive people have, many things are kept from them which they ought to know. Deacon Jones' boy misbehaves at church, and is not only getting a bad reputation for his ill manners and want of respect for the Lord's house and good people, but is actually being led off by those young men who attend church for other reasons than the worship of God, and who occupy the squirrel-eaten rows hard by the outer door, and whose mission seems to be to create enough confusion in the rear of the congregation to keep fifty people who want to listen to the Gospel, from hearing with satisfaction. And yet when the deacon was approached upon the subject he became angry and said it was a reflection upon his family. He insisted that his children knew how to behave and that his boy was slandered. One of Brothers Slaughter's daughters has acquired the habit of giggling and passing notes in the choir, and when a sister called the pastor's attention to it he grew impatient, and when one of the brethren suggested to him that his ser-

mons were getting too long and to contain more matter than the average member of his congregation could digest, he showed a disposition to resent it by stating that as soon as the people got tired of his family and his ministry he would retire from the field.

Now the fact is, Deacon Jones and Pastor Slaughter have got the blood of Adam in their children as well as the rest of us, and the average sensible hearer in the congregation can tell as well, if not better, what the people can understand and appreciate than the preacher, who is closeted with his papers and books most of the week making preparation. It is strange to me that people should be so touchy about such matters. Suppose Sallie Collins had not spoken plainly to me when I used to want to go so fast at Black Jack Ridge, and at the time we first settled in town, and that she had kept her precious mouth closed when the brethren were about to call me to the deaconship, would not I have been in a fix, both in country and in town? If I had been irritable and easily offended under her kind ministrations the presumption is that, like most of women, she would have let me go on with my own notions into trouble.

She says that when I had the dengue I was hard to please and irritable, and for the first time during my married life, she was afraid to

come about me and more afraid to offer suggestions. What the dengue does for the body, something does for the mind and spirit of quite a number of our people.

I am ashamed that I ever acted so foolishly under the power of that awful disease, and my prayer is, that our over sensitive members will get as effectually cured of their malady as I have been of mine.

My mind is so full of dengue and things like it that I will have to defer a description of Bro. Slaughter's return from his vacation till my next.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER TWENTY-NINE.

HUMAN NATURE—THE CONSCIENCE—A RETURN-
ING PRODIGAL—DEATH—THE WANDER-
ING BOYS—PROSELYTING.

The study of human nature has always been a question of great interest to me, but the subject never interested me so much as it has recently.

There is a large amount of the aforesaid article in the religion of a great many people. It shows its weakness more clearly in connection with things divine, than anywhere else. The average man will swear the truth in the courthouse. The average business man will act on his judgment in a trade. Questions of health and education and business will generally command the services of a man's convictions. On questions of religion people will, in many cases, put their convictions of conscience in their pockets and coolly stultify their articles of faith. A church is an organization built upon a platform of principles. The creed may be

delivered orally, or it may be written, but still every organization, financial or political, or religious, must, in order to get respect from the people or stick together, have some sort of constitution or manner of doing things. People that join are made to swear that they will stick to the principles to which they subscribe. It is always in order, of course, for a man to change his mind and step down and out. The preacher swore me and Sallie Collins in when we were married, and by the rules governing society, under the laws of the land, we agreed to be governed. Nobody is expected to marry that does not want to be bound by the laws governing the family relation.

There are people, strange to say, who condemn perjury, wax warm in telling of the horrors of being governed by improper motives in political matters and who will cry against men who are untrue to their country in times of great peril, and yet go right along and join themselves to a church whose leading principles of organization they do not believe. Why can not poor human nature see that this means perjury and dishonesty? These people can understand these charges anywhere except in church matters. Just think of a man or woman, either, who believes that the church of Christ ought to be

composed only of believers in Christ going out of a Baptist church to join one that will take in people, young or old, without any profession of a changed, regenerated heart. Imagine a man who believes that adults, and believing adults only, are fit subjects for baptism, and that the immersion of a believer in water is baptism, and that nothing else can be properly substituted for it, going over to join an organization that claims to be a church of Christ, and yet receives children for baptism, takes unconverted people into full connection, substitutes sprinkling for baptism, and practices pouring instead of the ordinance that shows our Saviour buried and rising from the dead.

One of our members that came back last Sunday, had been with the Episcopalians. Her people are ordinarily well educated, and of late are making some money. She was fond of society and dancing, and took great offence at Brother Slaughter when he fired a broadside into the ball-room, and dancing at weddings, and severely criticised the conduct of church members who played at progressive euchre and attended theatres and circuses. She said the Baptists were fogies, and that the good rector was right in saying that the Baptists were ignorant, and that their churches generally were composed of

very common people. So off she went, a year ago, and joined herself to those who were wise and respectable. What a lust some people have for respectability. As a miser will stand on the margin of the lake of fire and almost lose his equilibrium reaching after a nickel, so these society people will often risk their souls for the sweet privilege of moving in a little third rate society, getting a knowledge of cards and mingling in the dance. Our sister said she had a good time for a while. The rector and his members petted and flattered her, and the responsive service and forms in general were new and captivating. It was really nice, she said, to go to church and Sunday-school, take part in all the services, and then go with the same people to parties and dances four nights in the week. At the end of six months she was taken sick, and for awhile was at death's door. Forms and ceremonies and cards and wine and music and dancing failed her in the Dark Valley, and nothing gave comfort but the assurance of a present Christ in her soul that was saved in a Baptist revival, that took place in an old log country meeting house, when she was in her thirteenth year. The pomp and show and pleasure and respectability of society all lost their charms to her from that hour, and she had often longed to be back under the faithful

and earnest ministry of Brother Slaughter. She said that the line was so completely blotted out between the Episcopal church and the world, if there ever was one, that being in was about the same as being out, and out was almost equal to being in. As evidence of the fact that the whole body, even in theory, lives near the world, they take anybody in that applies, and never turn anybody out. Certainly this is the church, if any, that ought to have the benefits of the union between Church and State. Its closeness to the world is proverbial.

Two boys once left home and settled in the same town, but did business in different houses. They were children of pious Baptist people. Both were proud, and yet while carefully secreting it from each other, both formed the drinking habit, and one dark night both fell into the same gutter. In that plight they agreed to join the church, but disagreed as to which church till the Episcopal was mentioned. They wanted religion in the mildest form possible, and decided as a prudential step to try the High Church of England first, and if they made a success of that, then manage somehow to get converted and join the Baptists.

Our erring sister, in giving her experience, said that she had gone back and went almost

to the weak and beggarly elements of the world in joining a church that took great interest in fashion, and pleasure, and respectability. With joyful hearts we received her back, singing, as we all gave her the hand, "Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God."

Our pastor never makes any effort at proselyting. I do not believe he knows how. He does not seem to want people to join our church till they are thoroughly convinced that Baptists are right, and that their conscience will not allow them to go anywhere else. Still we are mighty glad to see these prodigals coming back home. In my next I will tell you about the one that came back from the Methodists.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER THIRTY.

A BAD COLD.—REMEDIES.—A WIFE'S PRESCRIPTION.—A PASTOR'S ADVICE.—A BAPTIST IN THE WRONG CHURCH.—BEST TO FOLLOW CLEAR CONVICTIONS.

I have had a cold. Nearly everybody in town has had a cold. I have had a very bad cold, and in fact have rarely ever had any other sort of a cold. It made me sneeze and cough, and kept the water running out of my nose and eyes distressingly. It stopped up my head, gave me headache, neuralgia and pleurisy. It gave me a chill and a fever, and made my bones ache, and finally put me to bed. I am up and down, in and out, at home and abroad, and really some people get uneasy about me. Sallie Collins smiled at their fears, and gently said that I would come out all right, that I had not in all my troubles missed a meal. It is really strange how sick and hungry people will be with a cold.

Every one of my friends had a remedy for a

cold, and some of them had several cures, each one infallible. The doctors, as a general thing let colds run their course. They do not seem to know what to do to stop the disease, or how to break it up instantly. But if there is anything the people in general know all about, it is bad colds and religion. If there is a time on earth when a man wants advice, and he is willing to risk something in following the suggestions of his friends it is when he has a bad cold. One dear friend told me to take morphine. He said it would quiet my nerves, and dry up the secretions—stopping the flow from my eyes and nose. Another one urged quinine in large doses when I spoke of the chills and fever. I took both, and had dreams of being everywhere except at home and in Heaven. My head roared, and the sensation was that of a tired traveler trying to sleep on a hard bench at a railway station, with heavy trains passing every five minutes. I complained of cold feet, and they were put in hot water, with pepper and mustard stirred in. My throat was sore, and a cold wet cloth was put around it. One came running with a “smoke ball” for me to thump and sniff the dust up my nose. This was to make me sneeze and clear up my head. Another brought me a bottle to smell, with harts-horn, or electricity, or something else in it,

that came near taking off the top of my head. I took oil and pills, and ate onions, and drank teas and stews, with whisky in them, ate lemons—and in fact took everything that everybody prescribed. I sneezed and shed tears and vomited and dreamed, and suffered otherwise, until I am unfit for almost anything. Since coming to myself I am at a loss to know which was the worst, the disease or the remedies I took.

Sallie Collins told me all the time I was trying too many things for my cold, that some medicines were incompatible, and the reason that perpetual motion was an impossible invention was in the fact that action and reaction are always equal in opposite directions.

People in their church relations act very much as I did with my cold. Things do not go to suit them in the church, and being restless and in trouble many of them are ready to try anything that comes along. The Campbellites tell them the cold feet and sore throat demand more water. The Methodists prescribe pepper and electricity and stimulants. The Presbyterians prescribe order and decorum and education, while the Episcopalians recommend soothing syrup and opiates. If our members could only have a little patience when they take spiritual colds, and follow up the Baptist methods, cure would soon be effected. With the expe-

rience I have just gained, the next time I catch cold, I shall adopt the following prescription, given by Sallie Collins:

1. Keep in doors ; avoiding exposure.
2. Eat wholesome diet, in reasonable quantities.
3. Drink pure water and fresh milk.
4. Have plenty of fresh air, and take sleep and exercise according to the demands of my judgment.

I am sure these directions are good to prevent as well as cure the aforesaid malady.

So Bro. Slaughter tells our members:

1. Keep inside the bounds of christian teaching. Avoid exposure to the temptations of the world. Keep away from the saloon, race track, ball room and circus.
2. Feed on the word of God.
3. Drink not wine, but water and the pure milk of the word.
4. Breathe much of the pure air of the spirit of God in prayer and meditation.
5. Take plenty of exercise in speaking to sinners, really living and giving to the spread of the gospel at home and abroad.

These things will prevent and cure Christian coldness.

In my last letter I promised to tell you about one of our members who some time ago joined

the Methodists, but had returned. His wife was a Methodist and so stumbled at the Baptist idea of communion that he gave up all hope of her ever being a Baptist. The preacher in charge found out the situation and urged the duty of families going together in religion. Distressed by what appeared to him an insurmountable barrier between him and his wife, he said he determined to shut his eyes to his convictions as a Baptist and go with his wife to the Methodist church, so that the children might all be in the same Sunday School and finally join the same church. Of course he was received without any statement of change in his convictions of Bible teachings. It was simply announced by the preacher that the applicant had been a Baptist, but desired now to cast in his lot with the Methodists. Emboldened by the fact that this brother was a prominent citizen, a man of means and personal influence, the preacher in charge, the following Sunday began a series of doctrinal sermons calculated to unsettle and win others. He discussed infant baptism as a starting point in a child's religious life and the beginning of its connection with the church of Christ. He pressed the claims for sprinkling and pouring for baptism, gave the immersionists some heavy blows—but said at the conclusion that if anybody demanded immersion he would adminis-

ter it. "Oh, Lord have mercy on me," said a Baptist man with a heavy heart, who had stultified his convictions of truth to go with his wife. The following Sunday the preacher discussed church government and showed to the satisfaction of all the old Methodists, who looked through the discipline at the teachings of the New Testament, that the Episcopal form of government was scriptural. As the Baptist man in his Methodist clothes went home that day, thinking of the power held by the preachers in the Methodist church, from the circuit rider to the bishop, he said in his heart, "Oh, Lord, what am I to do with my convictions?" The following Sunday Arminianism was urged in its most objectionable forms, and apostacy urged on the ground that the soul worked in and of course could work out. The more the brother tried to be a Methodist, the more he saw that in principle and heart he was a Baptist. He lost interest in his business and with a sad heart told his good wife how he had trampled his convictions in the dust in order to go with her. Without a contest both of them decided it was best for him to return to the Baptist fold. In giving his experience the day he came back, he said: "I tried to school myself to believe that there was not much difference in the forms of religion. I wanted my wife and children in

the same church with me. The first sermon I heard after joining the Methodist church, I saw as I never saw before, that by staying there I was giving my influence to infant baptism, the strongest pillar of the Roman Catholic Church. I could not long subscribe to it. The form of church government there is opposed to all my convictions of soul liberty. The preacher receives members and the local congregation has no voice in electing its pastor and daily spiritual guide. The doctrine of apostacy made so prominent in the system, is opposed to the plain statement of our Saviour who emphatically states that "the gift of God is eternal life." It teaches the doctrine that there is a power somewhere above the power of God, Though we are "kept by the power of God," and though Christ says "no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand," yet the doctrine is earnestly set forth that God's children, "purchased by the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ, may be lost for ever in hell."

At this point, rising to his feet and taking the pastor by the hand, tears of penitence flowing down his face, while his whole frame shook with deep emotion, he turned to the congregation and said: "I am a Baptist. I have sinned in going away. I ask forgiveness and restoration. Pray for me and pray for my poor wife,

who sits there in tears, that somehow we may be led to see eye to eye and speak the same thing in religion, as well as in other matters. Pray also that neither of us may ever again be tempted to stifle our convictions as to the plain teachings of the word of the Lord."

Everybody seemed to be glad to give the returning prodigal the hand of welcome. The wife was deeply moved at the scene. Approaching her husband, after the last member had given the hand of fellowship, and the closing verse of the song had died away, she praised God in the hearing of all people, and said: "I thank God that He has made me free in Christ. I know from this good hour no king, no priest, but Jesus. If the truth makes us free, we shall be free indeed. My soul doth magnify the Lord. Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind. Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

A deep and lasting impression was made on the minds of the congregation. As the people went away a member predicted that the sentiments given out by the one who praised the Lord aloud would land her in the Baptist Church before many moons should wax and wane. Sallie Collins indicated her belief that the sister who had aided the preacher to decoy her husband into a church organization whose

principles he did not believe, was about to take a remedy for her spiritual coldness that would not only cure the disease, but prevent its return in the future.

“Truth is mighty, and will prevail.”

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER THIRTY-ONE.

PRINCIPLES BETTER THAN NAMES.

People ought to be honest and earnest in religious matters with themselves and other people, too. The Campbellites are a curious people. Their preachers say, and many of their members seem to believe, that there is not much difference between a Campbellite and a Baptist, except in the name. They call their church the Christian church and say that our church is not the Christian church. They call themselves Christians, and call us sectarians, who are teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. They tell us our church organization, manner of receiving members, ordination of preachers, process of discipline, order of communion and internal affairs generally are wrong and radically unscriptural, and yet if we will just drop the name Baptist and take the name Christian, all will work right. They have the slickest way of covering things up with a name of any people that I

ever saw. I don't have as much confidence in names as some people. I do not believe that to change the name of a goat to sheep will put wool on his back, and I have no idea that the changing your name from Sam to John will make you cross-eyed. I am honestly of the opinion that the changing of my name from Jacke Collins to Sam Jones would not make me a preacher. You cannot change the color of a crow by calling him crane.

I can understand how the people of Antioch got in the habit of calling Christ's disciples Christians. They preached a new doctrine and referred so much to Christ that the people naturally called them Christians. Now if those Campbellites in the days of Alexander Campbell, who wanted his people called disciples or reformers, had been so much wiser and more scriptural than others, so that the outside world had given them the name Christian, it would not be so objectionable. But for those people who want to monopolize the name and get insulted if any of us do not recognize their claim is to me really funny.

Brother Slaughter says that he wants to be kind and polite, but he has a conscience that will not let him call a Campbellite church the Christian church. When we withdrew fellowship from one of our members who went to the

Campbellites, Brother Slaughter called attention to the name and said: "Shall we withdraw from this brother and write on our church book that it is done because he has joined the Christian church?" When Brother Slaughter suggested the impropriety of turning people out of the church for joining the *Christian* church, some of our members took the fidgets and seemed slightly confused. The next day after our pastor made this suggestion, I met a Campbellite and asked him what sort of a record *he* thought we ought to make on our church book; and like the man without the wedding garment, he was speechless. Nobody has a right to make me tell a falsehood. Now, if I say privately or in a public place that the organization that teaches doctrines similar to those advocated by Alexander Campbell is *a* Christian church, or *the* Christian church in this town, I state what I do not think is true. A man or woman who requires me thus to offend my own conscience is simply left.

When I was a boy, I remember we had a quarrelsome boy in school, who was always hunting up a fight. He would make a mark and dare us to step over it. He would put a chip on his shoulder and dare anybody to knock it off. He would pinch and stick pins in us and dare us either to resent or tell the teach-

er. He was generally prudent and either picked at boys smaller than he was, or with those who thought it wrong to fight. A genuine Campbellite preacher is a curious piece of humanity. We do not agree at all. He believes in faith before repentance. I agree with Jesus Christ and Brother Slaughter, and they both say, "Repent and believe the gospel." He believes that the line that lies between a lost and saved state is crossed after a sinner is baptized. I do not think that a sinner ought to be baptized until he is saved. He believes in burying sinners in baptism to kill them, and I believe in waiting for the Lord to kill them before men bury them. Now think of it.

A Campbellite preacher will tell you in the beginning of a meeting that he believes in union, and that we are one family and ought to wear the family name, and yet, as soon as you start to school with him, he draws a line and puts a chip on his shoulder and dares you to fight him. There is an amount of brass and cold-blooded impudence in such conduct that is amazing. And yet it takes with a great many people. Some preachers are afraid to debate with Campbellites, and others think it is wrong to do it, and thus, between fear and conscientious scruples, many a challenge to fight goes unanswered. These failures to accept a fight

are all counted as victories, and not a few are led away by these bold men who make a great many challenges which they know no one will accept. It is really astonishing what a small stock of knowledge it takes to make some debaters.

One of our members has just come back who joined the Campbellites over a year ago, and in his statements to the church said he had been in a cold, wet country. He said the nights were long and dark, and that the people were never so happy as when in a state of war. He said the year had been spent fighting the mourner's bench, including experiences, making war on sprinkling and pouring for baptism. Infant membership and the present acting influences of the Holy Spirit in convicting and saving sinners were held up as twin heresies, and debate after debate had been sought after.

To me this wandering brother looked tired and sleepy, and hungry and thirsty. He said it was work, work, work to be saved, and work, work, work to stay saved. Under this teaching he was always in trouble, fearing and trembling, as if in the face of some great danger. He expressed himself as settled in the Baptist theory of salvation "by grace through faith" and "not of works," and that resting in this and feeding on the doctrines of grace and

Spiritual influence, his experience was one of joy in the Holy Spirit.

Much as you may talk about the reformation, no man can improve on the plan of salvation presented by John the Baptist, Paul, and John Bunyan.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER THIRTY-TWO.

THE REMOVAL.

I am tired. Sallie Collins is tired. Our town life has kept us moving more rapidly than we were accustomed to go in the country. Our minds turn to the country farm as the best place for old age and for our children. We are not sorry we moved to town, but my custom has been, in hunting and fishing, to go home as soon as I got what I went after. Our children are very well educated, have all been converted, and will soon be grown. They have been in society very little, except at school and at church. As Sallie Collins and I were both brought up in the country we prefer to settle our children there. We have always joined the preacher in holding up Christ as the model character for the imitation of our children; but I have always felt that I would be content if our little daughters, in their efforts to be like Christ, should get to be the equals of Sallie Collins. One day I said as much to the good

woman, and in reply she said that her desire was to have the boys be as true to principle and as ready to take good advice as Jake Collins.

The church is doing well. The prodigals that were ever any account to the church have all come back. The unconverted wishy-washy ones would do well to stay in other fields. Brother Slaughter is equal to the demands of the cause, as pastor of this church, and it now looks as if he were settled for life.

We are offered a good price for our property—enough to buy and stock a large farm for the family, and to settle each one of our children at the proper time. The papers are being signed, and when we get moved and settled down we hope you will come to see us.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER THIRTY-THREE.

When a boy, my father always impressed me with one thought each time I was sent on an errand. His clear order, issued hundreds of times, rings in my ears yet—"As quick as you get through, come right back." We went to town to get school advantages for our children, and improve, if possible, our church opportunities, when yet our boys and girls were of tender and impressible years.

We secured what we went for. Our children all have a fair English education, and have become Christians. We did not go to town to make money, but our investments have been good ones, and by economy and patience, with the Lord's blessing, our property is more than doubled. Having obtained all we went for, and more besides, the conclusion was reached that the family had better retire to a farm and make a permanent home.

You know that city life does not suit the habits of Jake and Sallie Collins. We did not marry as young as people usually do, and after

a man is forty-five and his wife forty-two, it does not appear to be good policy for them to move to a new country or in any way to break off from their former habits of living. There is such a thing as getting people set in their ways. Town customs do not, as a rule, suit us. Boys and girls sit up too late at night. They get "heady," and want to set up for themselves before we think it prudent; and while we still have control of ours, we prefer to go back to country habits. Our means were sufficient to buy a good, well-improved farm, with good land enough adjoining it to settle all four of our children at the proper time. So here we are back in the country, with a better room for the preacher than we had at Black Jack Ridge or in town. We have bought stock and poultry, and it does my heart good to see Sallie Collins in the yard among the chickens, and guineas, and geese, and turkeys and ducks, as in the days of our early married life, and to observe our boys with the sheep and calves and pigs and colts, while the girls stroll through the flower yard and garden.

All the time we lived in town we did our own work, and hence on our arrival on the farm the children were ready to meet every emergency. I may be considered an old foggy, and cranky and stingy and what not, but I do not think it best

to have servants in the family where there are a number of children, all vigorous and healthy, as Jake and Sallie Collins and the little ones have always been. Early to bed and early to rise, and plenty of good, active employment, in doors and out, is my ticket, and Sallie Collins votes it with her unworthy husband at every election. When I move from this farm I expect to go straight to heaven. Our postoffice is Carolina.

We have been to church—you know we always go to church and Sunday-school—three Sundays in succession. Bro. Wells, the pastor, is a good preacher, and we have a good country meeting-house, owned by the Baptists and paid for. It is the only church in the neighborhood, and other people besides Baptists gave some money to it, with the understanding that when the other denominations build, if they ever should, the Baptists would help them. That part of it I liked. It is on the same principle that in Tennessee, in our younger days, we helped our neighbors roll logs and shuck corn. It takes a right smart man or woman to go into this sort of an arrangement in religious matters without getting things too much mixed. Bro. Wells, all the people say, is one of the best men in the world. He is very much opposed to discord, and preaches a great deal on Christ-

ian Union. To me he seems to be uneasy all the time for fear he will hurt somebody's feelings. It is in my mind a matter of serious doubt whether or not he would dare tread on the devil's toes, if the old fellow should, in a gentlemanly way, get in the path ahead of him. Union, union, union! I never did hear half so much of it in the same length of time in my life, as since I came to the Carolina neighborhood. And, really, it is a good thing to have if you do not have to sacrifice principles and convictions.

Bro. Slaughter and Paul have it down right. They believe in union in "the truth as it is in Jesus." Bro. Wells is in favor of holding union meetings with Presbyterians and Methodists and Campbellites and Adventists and Sanctificationists and Christadelphians and all. He says they all do some good, that souls are saved under the preaching of all, and that he believes in "proving all things and holding fast to that which is good." I do believe he is sorry that the meeting-house belongs to the Baptists. If it were a union house he would be all right.

Well, this is a new state of affairs to me. It is my first experience in a union Sunday-school. They have one here in full blast. They have union Sunday-school papers, union song books, and it is understood and publicly stated that

nothing at all sectarian shall ever enter the school. Common ground is to be occupied by every teacher, and nothing is to be taught that is offensive to anybody. As it is generally understood that the Cambellites preach more about union than anybody else, a brother of that persuasion acts as superintendent. Care is taken that a member of every denomination in the neighborhood has a class. By some means, I see that the little children are all in classes under Pedobaptist teachers. Sallie Collins and our children and I have been there every Sunday since we moved. They are getting up a class for Sallie Collins, and in order to make everybody feel good under this union idea, the superintendent spoke to me about taking a class. I excused myself by saying I was unfit for either the office of deacon or Sunday-school teacher. I asked to be put in a class, and was assigned to a place under Deacon Philips, in what is known as the Bible class. I wonder what the others are studying.

Deacon Philips received me kindly and, although a Baptist let me know at once that the glory of the school was in the fact that it was not at all sectarian, and that the statement of the Psalmist was verified: "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." A brother in the class spoke

up promptly after being introduced to me: "I am a member of the Christian church, and hope that we all will ever bear in mind that Christ prayed that his disciples might be one." It is understood in the school that all controverted points of doctrine must be avoided. In teaching the fall of man, you can instruct that he fell some, but that he ever became totally depraved will not be tolerated. There are so many views in the school as to the personality and work of the Holy Spirit in the plan of salvation that the moment I began asking some questions on that subject I was reminded that that was forbidden fruit. You must not say a word about the origin or government of the church, and though you may say that baptism was commanded by Jesus, the suggestion as to whether it be right or wrong to pour or sprinkle or immerse, would be considered an offense close akin to the unpardonable sin. If the subject of repentance comes, it is discussed in a very general way.

The subject of faith gives our good Brother Philips the fidgets, and it would set the prairie on fire to talk about the order to be observed in the teaching and practicing of repentance, faith, baptism, communion, origin and government of the church, election, final preservation and

call to the ministry and the order of the Gospel, and yet they run altogether on the idea of Christian union.

It seems really funny to me. Leaving out the things mentioned, I am afraid we will not do much good. Our time is put in talking about the number of books in the Bible, the origin of the devil, travels of Paul, location of towns and seas and rivers, and all questions of history and geography are discussed with a relish. We are in trouble whenever we get to the plan of salvation and church matters. How we are to build up a Baptist Church in this house and under this pressure, I am at a loss to imagine. If it is not our aim to build it up, it seems to me to be the best thing to sell out and quit.

If the basis of a Union Sunday-school is strictly adhered to Baptists have more to lose and less to gain than any other people. My deliberate conviction is that a Union Sunday-school is a ring-streaked and striped, speckled and spotted set of cattle. I do not like it. I never belonged to one before. Am I right in the following conclusions?—

1. Every kind of institution ought to belong to somebody, so that somebody will be responsible. Let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband, and

let the two be responsible for the care of their own children. The reason that a stray dog is a nuisance is because he is without a home and a master.

2. It is just as important that the plan of salvation be presented in the class as from the pulpit. The same church that appoints the preacher for the congregation ought to control the appointing power of teachers in a Sunday-school.

This state of affairs will never do. Was ever a Baptist church in this fix before? How did it get out?

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER THIRTY-FOUR.

DEACONS AND BUCKNER ORPHANS HOME.

To my great surprise I find as much leisure time to read and study and write as I did in town. My boys take after their mother, and can be trusted. They have business sense and are full of energy. Sallie Collins says, "Put all the responsibility on the boys that they can stand." She will not let me talk to her about the state of affairs that would exist in case of my death; but I can clearly see two things the good woman has in her mind. She does not expect to get married any more, and she relies on these boys to run the business of the family in case of my death, or when we both are under the infirmities and weaknesses of age. She talks to the boys a great deal, and I catch expressions from them that indicate the tuition they are receiving. Better train a boy up with the impression that he will be expected to take care of his aged parents than to toil and lay up money and give him to understand that he has to have a fortune at command when he becomes a man.

As I can never preach nor teach in Sunday-school, and have been afraid heretofore to allow my name used in connection with the deaconship, I am a little afraid I have made a mistake, and perhaps dodged some responsibilities. Our union Sunday-school will of course somehow be changed to a Baptist Sunday-school, and of course we will some day at Carolina have a pastor who will take position and contend for church work on the basis of Baptist principles. In that event a feeling has recently come over me that I may again be called to act as deacon. You know that in town they wanted to put me forward, but under the advice of Sallie Collins and my own mature judgment I declined. The good woman knows that I have improved since in some respects, as well as I do, and by study and by practical exemplification of qualities suited to the deaconship, I do not wish to be forced again to decline, if the brethren should elect me. First, I asked myself what a deacon ought to be. The Bible told me at once what he ought to be and what he ought not to be. In the New Testament I found that he ought not to be a fool or a drunkard, or a thief, or a covetous man. I do not believe that either the brethren or Sallie Collins will find me guilty of any of these sins. We are taught that a deacon must be a good man

and have "a good report among them that are without;" that he must be a good business man and be a devoted Christian, full of the Holy Spirit. I know I can never be a first-class, perfect deacon, but I do believe that the finances of a church in the hands of Jake Collins, with such a woman as Sallie Collins to help him, would not prove a failure.

Please let me know if at any time you catch me off the track. I asked Bro. Wells, our Carolina pastor, if there was anything in the Testament that made it specially the duty of a deacon to hand around the bread and wine on communion occasions, and he replied that he had never investigated it. My opinion is that it takes all his time to dodge issues, and keep from hurting the feelings of the members of that union Sunday school. I shall not apply to him any more for instruction in Baptist principles and church polity.

The origin of deaconship, as given in the sixth chapter of Acts, was laid amid the necessities and sufferings of the poor. Right there I took my start on this question, I have not gotten far from this subject in my investigations. Most of our deacons seem to understand that this bread and wine business and the keeping of the accounts of a church, in building a church house, and receiving and paying over the pas-

tor's salary, is all there is of it. Some of them do not take time even to do that. Care for the poor seems to be among the lost arts of church work.

The same principles that demand the care of poor widows will demand the care of any other poor, and especially the care of orphans. As I pursued my investigations, my heart stuck right on the helplessness of orphanage, and up to this time I have not passed that station. I heard there was a Deacons' Convention in Texas, and I recently went to their meeting. As soon as I got the run of the business I found that I was in the heart of a body of men who had the key to the situation. Since I got back home Sallie Collins and the children have kept me busy telling what I saw. The Deacons' Convention met in Dallas, and after hearing of the Buckner Orphans Home, I went out and examined it. It is located near Dallas, and on the Texas & Pacific railroad. What a thought, to originate and lay the foundation of such an institution! In the sight of God, the angels and good men, I had rather have had the honor of laying the foundation of the Buckner Orphan Home than of finding a gold mine, discovering a continent, or establishing an empire. There is an interesting family of one hundred and three, most of them from six to twelve years of

age—the oldest sixteen and the youngest only a few months old. They have a school in the week, and have Sunday school and church, and are controlled and kindly cared for, just as if they were the children of those who have the management of the “Home.” They have good, warm clothing, and plenty of good food to eat, and any orphan child can have a home there, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic, Jew, Gentile, Infidel or Deist. Just so the child is an orphan, with nobody to care for it.

They have five hundred acres of land in different tracts, a good farm, a large barn and a good supply of farming implements. The boys are taught to work and study, and so are the girls. They do the house work, cook, sew and do very much like Sallie Collins and I have all ways had our children do at home. Oh, I was delighted. They have good, comfortable, but rather crowded quarters, for all the boys and girls, both at home and in school. They are happy, and romp and sing, just like children at home with fathers and mothers to care for them. Here is a good place for a poor orphan child to get a living, an education, good morals and religion. No religious creed is forced on them. The people in charge are Baptists, and as they believe in and teach the doctrine of soul liberty they never sprinkle babies or force any one

against his will in religious matters. The children can join any church they please, or decline to join any.

In my next I will tell you more about this wonderful institution, how it started, and what those Baptist deacons and Bro. R. C. Buckner propose doing. If I do ever become a deacon I shall certainly take all the stock. I am allowed, and attend all the meetings of that Deacons' Convention, in the interest of the Buckner Orphans Home. Sallie Collins and I have re-written our will and the Home is included.

Going back to the Deacons Convention, in session in Dallas, I heard the reading of the latter part of the General Manager's report, as follows:

"There is no sort of embarrassment over any of the property of the Home, and the General Manager has been relieved of all the indebtedness incurred personally for the institution, except a balance of \$250 on a ~~\$1000~~ note given in bank more than a year ago; a grocery account of \$270, and a note of \$1000, recently executed for cattle. But as in all such cases I assume all responsibility and take all risks, holding the institution under no obligation unless the money is sent in to liquidate such claims.

Altogether the outlook is highly encouraging,

and the present outlook is satisfactory, we should hasten the necessary collections for the main building, that it may be put up during the next year. Let us also see that we do not fail to finish the \$50,000 endowment. We cannot afford to gather several hundred orphan children and have nothing at all to depend on for their support but voluntary contributions. A failure of crops or a money crisis and finding us with such a family would at least reduce the institution to a great strait if not cause the children to suffer. Let us endow.

Respectfully submitted,

R. C. BUCKNER, Gen'l Mg'r."

Dallas, Texas, *Sept.* 29, 1887.

Resolved, That we, the Board of Directors of the Buckner Orphans Home, having heard the Annual Report of the General Manager, with great pleasure, are highly gratified at the amount of work done the past year; and having examined its financial statements, together with the vouchers, find them correct to our entire satisfaction; and that we heartily approve the plan of work and suggestions made.

(Signed) JOHN OVERALL, Pres. Board,
W. L. PIERCE, Secretary.

Sallie Collins insists on going with me to the next Deacons' Convention, and also on a visit to see the orphans. Of course you will hear from me again.

JAKE COLLINS.

LETTER NUMBER THIRTY-FIVE —THE LAST.

BUCKNER ORPHANS HOME, CONTINUED.

I am still studying the deaconship. Deacon, I find, means a servant, male or female. The male deacons in a church are to be set apart by the laying on of hands. The female deacons or deaconesses are helps, and are to do those things which men cannot do, or which women can do better than men. A careful study of this subject will show you that there is a good deal of that sort of business in a church, and Phoebe and some other Bible women are examples.

A deacon's lot is a right hard one, but if this office is well filled it will show a large amount of self denial and lay up a large treasure in Heaven. Let us see the practical workings of it.

1. A good deal is expected of a deacon by the Lord, good men and the world. A man ought to think and pray a long time before he

undertakes this work, and the brethren ought to exercise a good degree of common sense and prayer before inducting a man into a deacon's office.

2. He is a servant without a salary. He must make a living for his family and devote his attention to the church and its poor, "free gratis for nothing." The sexton gets pay and the pastor and the evangelist have salaries, but the deacon is expected to do an equal share in giving, to foot all those bills, and then do the work of a public servant besides. At first this struck me as unjust, but a careful study of the subject convinces me that a small amount of a deacon's time without pay is worth a good deal more to a church than all his time if under a salary. The very fact that he gets no pay for his work gives power to his appeals for aid in caring for the poor and feeding the orphan.

3. It is a great tax on a man's time and energy and patience to be all the time studying about plans to raise money and how best appropriate it in a church. A deacon ought to be a good man and a wise man, and a very faithful man, if he would "use the office of a deacon well." If a man has no time to give to this work he ought to resign. If he is the least bit covetous, and will not therefore set a good example by leading the members in contributions fully

up to his ability [it would be better for the church to send him to the legislature or abroad as an immigration agent till all the members have subscribed under the leadership of somebody else, and on his return let some good woman, with a full subscription list made out, stir his stingy soul, while tears stream from her eyes, telling the blessings that many orphans might have in Buckner Orphans Home if deacons only would magnify their office. . A good dog in the chase must be willing, have good scent and be long-winded. A preacher must be "apt to teach." A deacon that is fit for the position must be apt to give. Before our Texas churches in town or country care for the poor and for orphanage as the Lord requires, the resignations of a large number of deacons will have to be sent to them, and amid fasting and prayer other men sought to fill the vacancies.

Sallie Collins and I have been to the Buckner Orphans Home, and I believe she is sorry I did not locate in that neighborhood, so we could conveniently and constantly aid in supplying their daily wants. She says that the visit is worth the price of a pilgrimage. You know a woman can beat a man asking questions, and Sallie Collins found out more about that Orphanage in a day than I would have learned in

a week. After a thorough investigation she vouches for the accuracy of the following:

Rev. R. C. Buckner, of Dallas, Texas, has had the care of orphans and the poor on his mind nearly all his life. When a boy he took great interest in carrying food to the poor and needy, and such acts characterized his work after he became a pastor and a preacher. When but a mere child he took great interest in reading and hearing people talk about homes for orphans and other dependent classes. He has been specially interested in the orphanages under the care of Muller and Spurgeon. When editing *The Texas Baptist* he addressed a series of letters to the deacons of Texas with a view of securing their cooperation in carrying out the fixed purpose of his heart. The result of these letters was the calling of a convention, which he had repeatedly advised, and the founding of an Orphans' Home in Texas, and an agreement on the part of a number of deacons to rally around him in his effort to establish an Orphanage.

Many predicted failure, but not a shadow of doubt fell upon the pathway of this man of God. He saw success even in his dreams at night, and told his family that the orphans of Texas must have a home, even if it required the sale of his own home to procure it. He felt that he could

work and procure another with much less sacrifice, labor and suffering than the orphans of the Sate were then passing through in their homeless condition.

In January, 1881, the "Home" was opened with six children on property belonging to the institution. Brother Buckner continued earnestly at work till he secured 500 acres of land and buildings, into which he gathered a family of orphan children, with no incumbrance on the property. Sallie Collins learned that Brother Buckner did this at his own expense, as a contribution to the cause. At different times he borrowed money from \$100 to \$2700, without giving any mortgage on the property or asking anybody to share this risk with him, or being secured in any way. Though some of the brethren and members of the Board of Directors begged him not to involve himself, yet such was his confidence in the Lord, and the final success of the enterprise, that he never for a moment entertained a fear of failure.

He is a strong believer in special providence in answer to prayer, and watches closely for the guiding hand of the Holy Spirit in Christian work. Thus praying and watching, these circumstances wonderfully impressed his mind early in the history of this effort. One time he was shown a high pair of steps, down which an

orphan boy was dragged by the hair, after having been kicked by the man with whom he was living. At another time, walking along an obscure street in a Texas town, he heard the voice of a weeping child, and looking in the direction from which it came, he saw a child leaning against the chimney at the end of a cottage, weeping and saying: "They 'buse me 'cause I aint got no folks." Looking up from the spot to the orphan's God, he resolved to leave nothing in his power undone till a house was provided for such friendless, unprotected children.

Still at another time he was in conversation with three youhg ladies, and asked each of them what she would do if possessed of great wealth. One said she would build a fine mansion. The secoud said she would buy fine clothes. The third hesitated, but when urged said in tears: "I would build a home for the orphans."

These things had much to do with the building of the institution which the Board of Directors of the Deacons' Convention very properly decided should be called Buckner Orphans Home, because he was the founder. He has no property interest in it whatever, and never did have. The land is deeded to the institution itself as a corporation, and its Board of Direc-

tors is and ever will be, according to its charter, composed of nine Baptist deacons. Its charities are not confined to any sect. It was built for orphans.

Children are not taken and trained for servants. They are educated with reference to citizenship here and immortality and eternal life hereafter. Some children are transferred under contract to families that offer them homes. The right is retained to remand them to the Orphanage in case such are neglected or in any way mistreated. Some children have been bequeathed to this Orphanage by their dying parents. These are regarded as a peculiarly sacred trust. Children of the same parentage are never separated.

There are three separate funds, the Support Fund, the Building Fund and the Endowment Fund. From the building and endowment Funds not a dollar is ever drawn for any purpose whatever. The Support Fund alone bears all the expenses of the institution.

The Board of Directors meets twice a year and pass on the financial report and all the transactions of the General Manager.

The plan of the Orphanage is one large, main building of brick or stone worth \$25,000, with a system of cottages as may be needed. An endowment of \$50,000 is to be raised, and it now approximates \$17,000 in land, notes and

cash. The Building Fund on hand is something over \$3000. On with the grand work!

The Baptists of Texas and other friends in sympathy with this enterprise can and will erect that \$25,000 main building, heat it with steam, and put apparatus in it worth of the cause of orphanage. We must also raise the \$50,000 endowment. The foundations are solid. The financial management avoids encumbering the property with debt. Here every contribution is a safe investment. I never intend to rest in this life till the Buckner Orphans Home is so equipped as to be able to meet the demands of the houseless and homeless and dependent poor.

The feeling that I am called to be a deacon is growing on me. When we succeed in getting that union meeting and Union Sunday school kink out of the church at Carolina, and get a pastor who has got some real, old-fashioned Baptist sense, like Brother Brooks and Brother Slaughter, and then the church recognizes my call to the deaconship, Sallie Collins and I have the plan—she has written out the following preamble and resolutions for me to offer to the next Deacon's Convention:

“Whereas, Rev. R. C. Buckner, of Dallas, Texas, with the cooperation of the Deacons' Convention, has established the Buckner Orphans Home near Dallas, Texas, which at

present can care for one hundred orphan children, and which ought at once to be so enlarged as to be able to accomodate five hundred, and inside of ten years a thousand, and

Whereas, It is a Baptist enterprise, in charge of Baptists, and conducted on New Testament principles, therefore,

Resolved, That orphanage is, under the providence of God, a subject that ought to claim a large share of the attention of our deacons, pastors and churches.

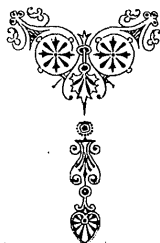
Resolved, That we petition at once through our General Manager that every church in Texas appoint one of its deacons, or some other efficient brother and an earnest Christian woman in the same church, as his assistant to keep the cause of orphanage ever before the church and community, and to forward money and supplies to the orphans, and that we request all parties to bring the matter before their churches.

Resolved, That we pledge ourselves to this work till death.

I am not in the habit of speaking much, but if I can get a second to this resolution I am bound to make one effort. If I survive the effort I will write to you and give you the result of the speech and the fate of my resolutions. They will carry in the Convention. I think the churches will consider them properly, and that I

will live to write you in the near future that the Buckner Orphans Home is meeting the expectation of its devoted founder and those in active sympathy with him.

JAKE COLLINS.



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